

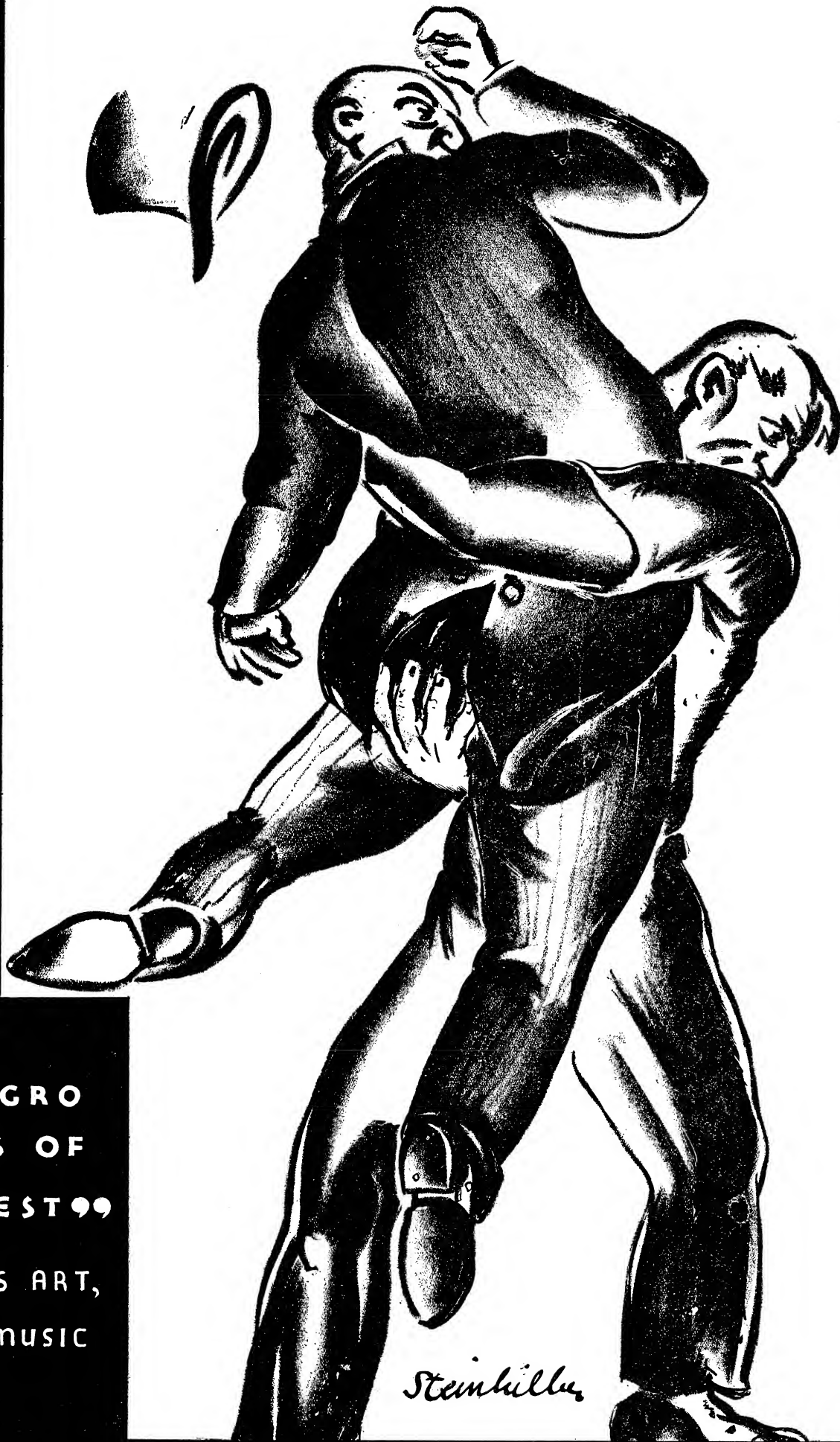
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JANUARY, 1931

NUMBER 8

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Seven years ago Vladimir Ilyich Lenin died in a village near Moscow. With every year that passes, his figure looms greater in the history of mankind. Lenin was the instrument whereby humanity made a tremendous leap forward. A new road of life was opened up for the million-masses under the leadership of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

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Here is the contrast that is shaking the entire world.

The whole world stands at the crossroads. One road leads to the destruction of mankind—that is the road of Hoover, of the Second International, of capitalism. The other road leads to regeneration of mankind—that is the road of Lenin, of the Communist International, of socialism.

Choose!

Papal Bull And The Unemployed—

The plots of the eight saboteurs and their foreign instigators, exposed at the trial in Moscow, were blessed by Catholic priests, Protestant ministers and rabbis who participated by attempting to organize a holy crusade against the Soviet Union. In churches and at mass meetings all over the world, they had incited their

believers with intense hatred against Russia and had implored their God with special prayers to help defend his divine self and his holy church from the machinations of the atheist devils who teach the Russian peasants to use fertilizers and tractors instead of praying for rain and for good crops. The holy war proved abortive because of the uncovering of the interventionists' plans; but the anti-Soviet propaganda of the churches has not ceased. The Pope delivering his Bull through the gold telephone recently installed in the Vatican as a belated concession to materialist science, decreed that after every mass, prayers must be said by priests and people together for the salvation and freedom of the Russian people. Protestant and Jewish church bodies are no less active in fomenting loathing for the Soviet Union and when a war breaks out against the latter, the apostles of the Prince of Peace and their Rabbi comrades will have prepared the ground for unprecedented war hysteria. But in the meantime, their divine king is napping and the anti-religious campaign in the Soviet Union is making strides. For religion, born of ignorance and illiteracy and nurtured by fears of the supernatural and dreads of nature's uncertainties, must retreat before education and science devoted to the task of making man not a victim but the master of himself and his environment. In the Soviet Union religion is doomed because the working class in power is devoting itself to releasing mankind not only from the slavery of economic and political oppression but also from the shackles of religious superstition and ritual that dwarf men and check their onward march to freedom.

When the bourgeoisie was a rising class fighting against feudal aristocracy, it too fought the reactionary church that was aligning itself with the feudal barons against the middle class. But as soon as the bourgeoisie came into power, it made peace with its former enemy for the purpose of checking the advance of the rising proletariat. In all capitalist countries today, the churches are subsidized as propaganda vehicles to engender loyalties to the existing system, and to divert the attention of the masses away from exploitation and misery.

The role of the churches as tools of capitalists is clearly illustrated by their activity during the present unemployment crisis. Jobless workers unable to feed their hungry families and facing eviction are told by thousands of well-fed clergymen that "adversity brings God nearer . . . it is more favorable to faith than prosperity" or that "misery in the world today is directly due to lack of faith in the living Christ." The Protestant-Catholic Bishop Manning contributed a prayer to unemployment relief, and not to be outdone the Roman Catholic Cardinal Hayes ordered the prayer "Pro quacumque necessitate" as Oratio Imperata (yes, no kidding) to be recited at mass for the unemployed. Everywhere the churches are inveighing vehemently against the protests of workers led by the Communist Party, whose leaders are denounced as

Joseph Freeman

On the Literary Front

Hell has broken loose in *The New Republic*. Our liberal contemporary ventured to publish, in its Fall Literary Number, a piece by Michael Gold reviewing Thornton Wilder's works. The result has been a barrage of brickbats, beerbottles and tin cans, with an occasional bouquet, hurled at the head of Michael Gold; not to mention some sniping at Karl Marx, Communism and Jews, with and without money. The literary sanctum on West Twenty-first Street hasn't had such a lively time since Malcolm Cowley and the other boys rolled around the mat with Babbitt, More & Co.

The review which aroused all this hysteria was written in Michael Gold's usual style of passionate indictment, jazzed up with original images and grotesque caricature. Michael Gold has been writing this way for a dozen years or more. He has even attacked Thornton Wilder before. Within this year the *New Masses* published a debate between him and J. Q. Neets on the value of Wilder's style. It seems, however, that there are some people in this world who do not read the *New Masses* and are unfamiliar with Michael Gold's style and ideas. At least so one is tempted to infer from the astonished rage which greeted Michael Gold's review.

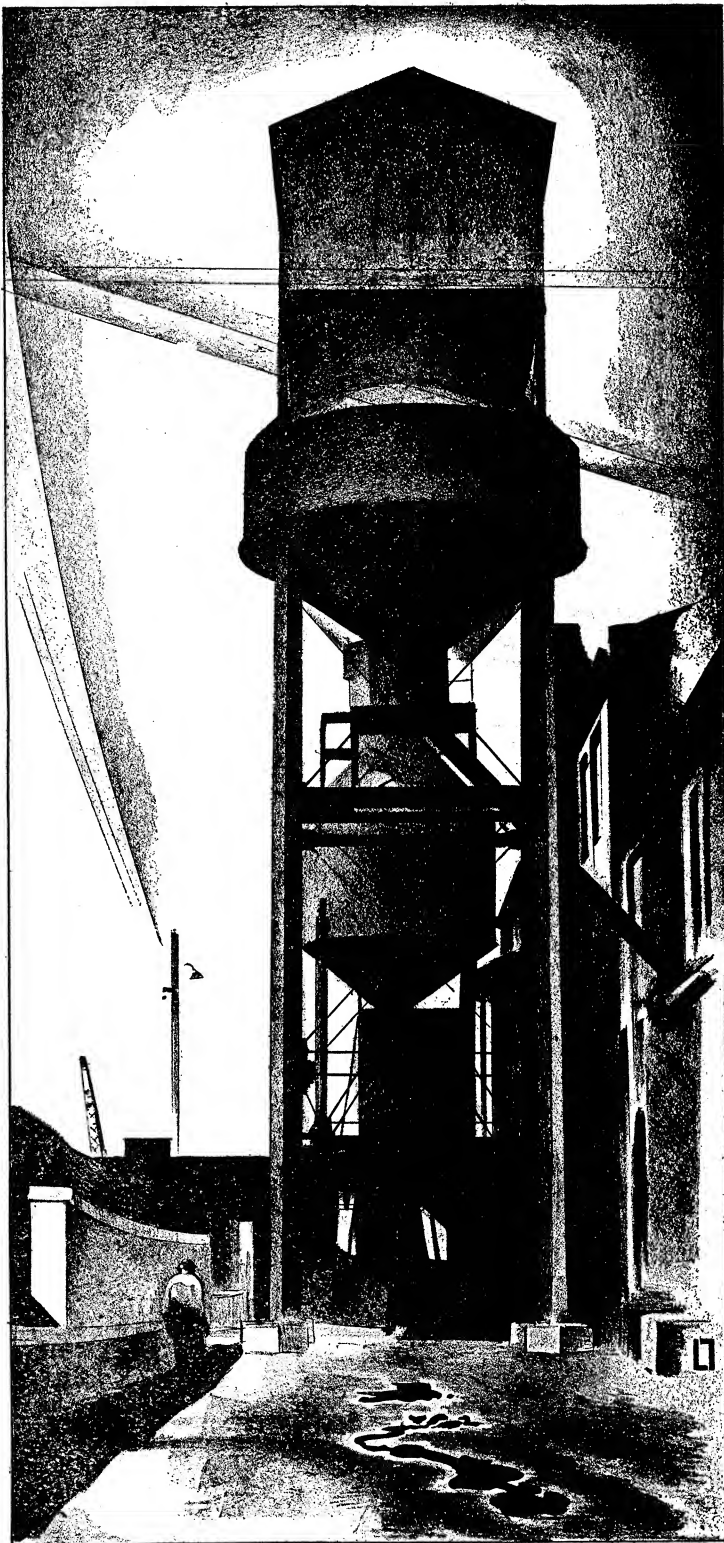
This review was an attempt to analyse the thought and style of Thornton Wilder; that is, he exercised the true function of literary criticism. His analysis may be summarised as follows:

(1) Thornton Wilder describes people losing sleep over a host of notions that the rest of the world has outgrown. He views these people with tender irony. He makes no claim to their usefulness to the world that feeds them; yet he hints that their palace mustiness is a most important fact in the world today. He writes with a brooding seriousness of them as if all the gods were watching their little lavender tragedies.

(2.) Wilder presents a museum, not a world. His characters are wan ghosts in "romantic costume. The author presides over an historic junkshop." Michael Gold does not object to historical novels, but feels that the past should be used as a rich manure, a springboard, a battlecry, as a deepening, clarifying, and sublimation of the struggles of the too-immediate present. He approves the heroic archaeology of Walter Scott and Eugene Sue, but condemns the vapidity of Wilder's little readings in history. He thinks he knows why Scott and Sue were greater than Wilder. Scott was the poet of feudalism, creating a glorious myth out of the past to confound the hateful bourgeois present; Sue was the poet of the proletariat, tracing through history an epic melodrama to strengthen the heart and hand of the revolutionary proletariat. But Wilder is the poet of the genteel bourgeoisie. He wishes to be the prophet of a genteel Christ, to restore (as Wilder himself puts it) through Beauty and Rhetoric, the Spirit of Religion in American Literature.

(3) Michael Gold, it seems, has no objection to such an aim. He feels he can respect any writer in America who sets himself a goal higher than the usual racketeering. He hints that Wilder might be tolerable if the religious spirit he attempted to restore were the crude self-torture of the Holy Rollers, the brimstone howls and fears of the Baptists, or the mad titanic sincerities and delusions of Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky. What he finds so contemptible in Wilder is the feebleness with which he conceives his task; for the religious spirit he seeks to restore is the literary religion that centers around Jesus Christ, the First British Gentleman; a dilettante religion without the true *neurotic blood and fire*, a *daydream of homosexual figures in graceful gowns moving archaically among the lilies*. In short, it is Anglo-Catholicism, that last refuge of the American literary snob.

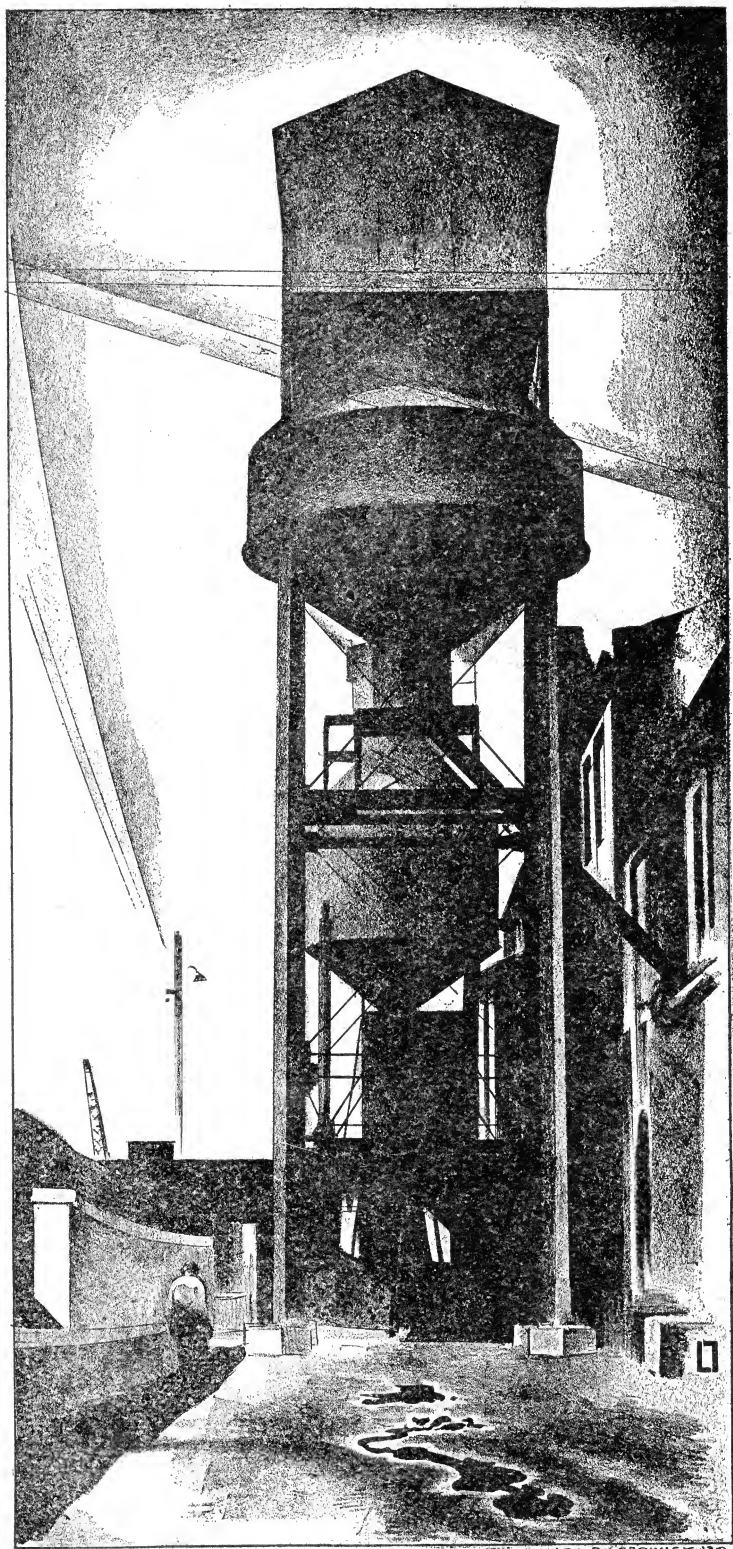
(4) Such feeble ideas, it seems to Michael Gold, naturally express themselves in a feeble style. He finds this style a diluted Henry James. He points out that Wilder talks much of art, of himself as Artist, of style; that he is a conscious craftsman; but finds Wilder's style pattern the most irritating and pretentious he has read in years. He finds it an echo of Anatole France, of the lesser Latins. Wilder, he says, strains to be spiritual, but who could reveal any real agonies and exaltations of spirit in this neat, tailor-made rhetoric? Wilder's style is false to the great stormy music of Anglo-Saxon speech. It has nothing in common with the styles of Shakespeare, Milton, Fielding, Burns, Blake, Byron,



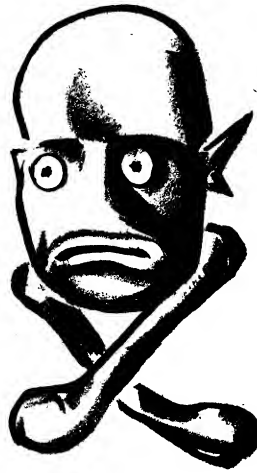
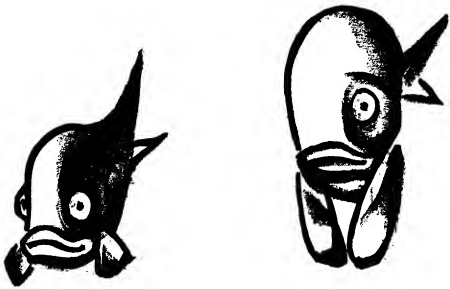
Louis Lozowick

disorderly atheists. When the churches ask their members to give to charity, they make it clear that they are but asking for palliatives to counteract the rising spirit of radicalism among the masses whom they urge to wait patiently and passively for the Lord to help them. The churches are fulfilling their historic function as corrupting handmaidens of the exploiting class by paralyzing the masses ideologically and emotionally, making them ill-equipped to combat their oppressors. They participate zealously in the attack against the Soviet Union because they recognize that a government whose purpose is not to enslave, but to emancipate the masses is determined upon their extinction and is destined to succeed unless capitalism intervenes.

THE EDITORS.



Louis Lozowick



HUGO GELLERT

THE MODEST DREAM OF SMALL FRY

Hugo Gellert

Chaucer, Hardy; and it is not the style in which to express America. It is alien to the styles of Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman.

(5) From an analysis of Wilder's style, Michael Gold proceeds to a further attack on Wilder's thought. He indicts the little novels which have nothing to say about the modern streets of New York, Chicago, New Orleans; the cotton mills, the murder of Ella May Wiggin, the child slaves of the beet fields, the stockbroker suicides, the labor racketeers, the passion and death of the coal miners, *Babbitt*, Jimmy Higgins, *Anita Loos's Blonde*. Gold wants to know whether Wilder is a Swede, Greek or American; no stranger would know from the books Wilder has written.

(6) Foreseeing objections, Michael Gold asks the rhetorical question: is it right to demand "nativism" from Wilder? and answers that question with a sharp affirmative. Yes, it is right, for Wilder offers himself as a spiritual teacher. Therefore one may say to him: what are your lessons? Specifically, Michael Gold wants to know whether Wilder's teaching will help the "spirit" trapped in American capitalism. He distinguishes between internationalism, which begins at home, and the rootless cosmopolitanism which marks Wilder, like every emigre trying to flee the problems of his community. He will not even allow Wilder to seek refuge in the claim that he describes the "human heart" with its eternal problems, since the "heart" Wilder probes is that of a small futile group with whom few Americans have the faintest kinship.

(7) From analysis of content and style, Michael Gold proceeds to a sociological explanation. Wilder's genteel subjects and milk-and-water style are natural to a poet of the genteel bourgeoisie. Michael Gold thinks the genteel bourgeoisie is a class recently arisen in America; a class produced by the war. He cites an anti-Marxist economist, Thorstein Veblen, as a prophet who, in his *Theory of the Leisure Class*, foretold the hopeless course of most American culture for the next three decades. Thornton Wilder, he says, is the perfect flower of the new prosperity, possessing all the virtues demanded by the leisure class according to Veblen's formula. The air of good breeding, decorum, priestliness, glossy high finish as against intrinsic qualities, conspicuous inutility, caste feeling, love of the archaic—all this is needed to help the parvenu class forget its lowly origins in American industrialism. It yields them a short cut to the aristocratic emotions; it disguises the barbaric sources of their income, the billions wrung from American workers and foreign peasants and coolies. Michael Gold challenges Wilder to write a book about America, predicting it will reveal all his fundamental silliness and superficiality.

I have summarised Michael Gold's review at great length and mostly in his own words. I have squeezed the juice out of the review, the fire, the rhythm, but I have left all the essential naked ideas. Let the reader go over the summary calmly. He will note that Michael Gold attacked Wilder as a feeble exponent of a feeble religion of a feeble social class, which begins to suggest the Communist viewpoint. He will note, too, that Michael Gold by no means considers style unimportant, but attacks Wilder precisely because his style fails to be a development, the style of the great English and American romantics. Finally he will note—and note

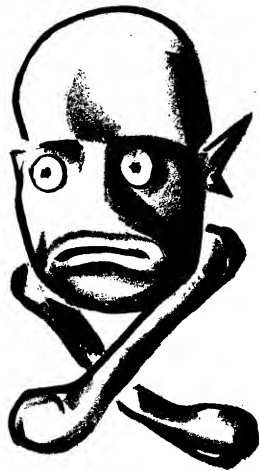
carefully, I hope—that Michael Gold does not mention Communism, and that his review is not necessarily a Communist review.

Michael Gold contemptuously contrasts Wilder's general religious spirit with the mad titanic sincerities and delusions of Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky. This, perhaps, was a "diplomatic" concession to the aesthetes, to show that one is not opposed to great writing on religious themes, merely to feeble writing. That was not, for example, Lenin's approach. He could recognize the power of Tolstoy's style without for a moment conceding that religious propaganda, however artistically disguised, was permissible. In this connection, Lenin's letter to Gorki on Dostoyevski's *Possessed* would be very instructive to anyone genuinely interested in the Communist attitude toward literature. The more talented an artist is, the greater his power to communicate to the reader a tolerance of the "crude self-torture of the Holy Rollers or the brimstone howls and fears of the Baptists", the greater is the duty of the Communist critic to expose the social basis, the conscious or unconscious aims of the artist.

It is true that Michael Gold's review mentions Ella May Wiggin, the cotton mills, child labor, coal miners and Jimmy Higgins; it also mentions *Babbitt*, *Stockbroker Suicides* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. Michael Gold demands of Wilder not that he be a Communist writer, but an American writer. He does not ask Wilder whether he is bourgeois or proletarian, but whether he is a Swede or an American. He does not challenge him to write about the proletarian revolution, which would be futile, but about modern America. I mention these points not to convict Michael Gold of "deviations," but to indicate the present state of literary thinking in America; for despite the fact that Michael Gold's review was in the best liberal tradition, it was bitterly assailed as Communist propaganda by laymen and critics alike.

The battlecry to write about "modern America" was raised by the liberal poets and novelists of the Wilsonian era. Nothing that Michael Gold has said in this review about Wilder can surpass the scorn and irony with which Harriet Monroe in *Poetry* and Ezra Pound in whatever magazine had the guts to print him said about the genteel writers of their generation. If the movement that produced H. L. Mencken, Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, Edgar Lee Masters, Vachel Lindsay, et al. meant anything, it meant precisely the "nativism" which Michael Gold demands of Thornton Wilder—and be it remembered that fundamentally he demands nothing else. Furthermore, even the demand that a writer pay attention to cotton mills and coal mines has been made before. Upton Sinclair may be an old story, but only this year Malcolm Cowley, whom nobody will accuse of being in Moscow's pay, banged cotton mills and coal mines down on the heads of the Humanist professors. As for confuting Wilder with Veblen, nothing could be more New Republican. That respectable journal lived for years on the liberal economics of Veblen, and the editors must have had pleasant memories of their youth when Michael Gold resurrected the good professor.

I submit that except for his own inimitable style, Michael Gold's review could have been written by H. L. Mencken or Malcolm Cowley. It was a brilliant review; it was profoundly true as far



THE MODEST DREAM OF SMALL FRY



HUGO
GELLERT

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THE MODEST DREAM OF SMALL FRY



HUGO
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Hugo Gellert

as it went; but it was not in essence a Communist review, though a Communist might subscribe to most of its assertions. Why all the rumpus, then? For, believe it or not, there was a terrific rumpus. Indignant letters from all sorts of men, women and liberals came pouring in from the four corners of the earth denouncing Michael Gold. It was said Michael Gold was not interested in art but in propaganda; his review was unreasonable and spiteful; it was biased and failed to understand that Wilder was interested in "universal" problems. It was an "outburst by a man with a myopic view of Communism." Indeed, Michael Gold was not even interested in Communism, because he wants to see master and slave change places instead of the "brotherhood of man" (presumably the "brotherhood" of boss and worker under the aura of Wilder's Spirit of Religion). The ladies were the most violent protestants. One of them branded Michael Gold's review as "unfair, vulgar, tainted, poisonous, scurrilous, profane dirty." This lady, imbued with the true Christian spirit, wanted to know why *The New Republic* allowed a Jew to review the works of an "apostle" of Anglo-Catholicism.

We can dismiss this personal abuse as mere hysteria aroused by Michael Gold's article for reasons which perhaps only a psychoanalyst could explain.

For one thing, many letter-writers resented Michael Gold's presence in the pages of *The New Republic*. You understand, it is all very well for Michael Gold to "spit on tulips," as one protesting aesthete delicately phrased it, in his own backyard, but to come right into our house, and put his feet on our mahogany table, and damn Anglo-Catholicism and pansies and the genteel bourgeoisie, really, that's too, too much. For this reason, many protest letters had nothing to say in rebuttal of Michael Gold's statements, and much to say about the folly and bad taste of *The New Republic* in publishing them. Then again polite people resented Michael Gold's passion. Literature should be discussed quietly, gently, with reserve, not passionately, with conviction. Michael Gold's manner rather than his matter offended the Emily Posts who rushed to Wilder's defense. Finally, Michael Gold's reference to the true neurotic blood and fire, to pansies, to homosexual ghosts, must have touched sensitive nerves. When Michael Gold began to jump up and down on the literary body of Thornton Wilder, there was something in his manner that suggested that it was strength crushing weakness, and those who emotionally sympathize with the "insulted and injured" rushed to the defense of the victim.

More important were the attempts to argue against Michael Gold's thesis. Here we are confronted with the sad state of American literary criticism. Because Michael Gold in his other writings defends Communism and urges young American authors to describe the life of the proletariat, liberal critics denounced his *New Republic* review as Communist propaganda. As an example, we may take Henry Hazlitt's diatribe in *The Nation*. This piece is an interesting example of class prejudice; for of course liberal reviewers, like liberal politicians, have their class basis and their class "ideology." Liberal aesthetics is the natural complement of liberal sociology; the dogma of art for art's sake struggles on the heels of other liberal dogmas, such as "free speech". In art, as in politics, the liberal hovers like a disembodied spirit over the contending camps, seeking to halt the social struggle by chanting vague phrases. The American Civil Liberties Union defends the "constitutional rights" of Communists and Fascists alike, without distinction, until it comes to a pinch, when it refuses to approve bail for arrested Communists. It is "above" the battle defending abstract "justice". The liberal critic, too, is "above the battle," defending something equally abstract, which for some reason he insists on calling art. This holy pose enables him to attack Humanists and Communists alike, and to insist that art shall subscribe to his dogmas. This is natural, if he only admitted that he has his dogmas; but he does not; and it is perhaps this self-deception which enables Hazlitt simply to misread Gold.

"Mr. Gold finds Mr. Wilder guilty of two mortal sins," Hazlitt says. "Failure to set his novels in his own time and country, and failure to choose his characters from the proletariat."

If the reader will go over the summary of Michael Gold's review, or better still, read the original, he will see that Michael Gold does nothing of the kind. Michael Gold damns Wilder for what he considers are feeble, genteel-bourgeois historical novels. On the other hand, he pours out passionate adjectives in praise of the historical novels of Walter Scott and Eugene Sue. Nor does he urge Wilder to write only about proletarians. His list

of permissible subjects includes stockbrokers, Anita Loos's Blonde and Babbitt. Michael Gold specifically demands of Wilder not proletarian but American literature. He insists on "nativism."

But supposing Michael Gold had insisted exclusively on the contemporary scene, and made no concessions to Walter Scott and Eugene Sue. That in itself would not make his review Communist propaganda. Dostoyevsky, an immeasurably greater novelist than Wilder, a more profound thinker than Michael Gold, insisted even more strongly on the journalistic element in literature. Reactionary though he was, he justified the people of Lisbon who lynched the poet singing of roses and nightingales during the earthquake. He ought to have been lynched, Dostoyevsky said, not because he made a beautiful poem, but because he sang of trivial things when his fellow-townsmen were suffering. This social attitude toward art, which our liberal philistines insist on calling Communist propaganda, is as old as literature.

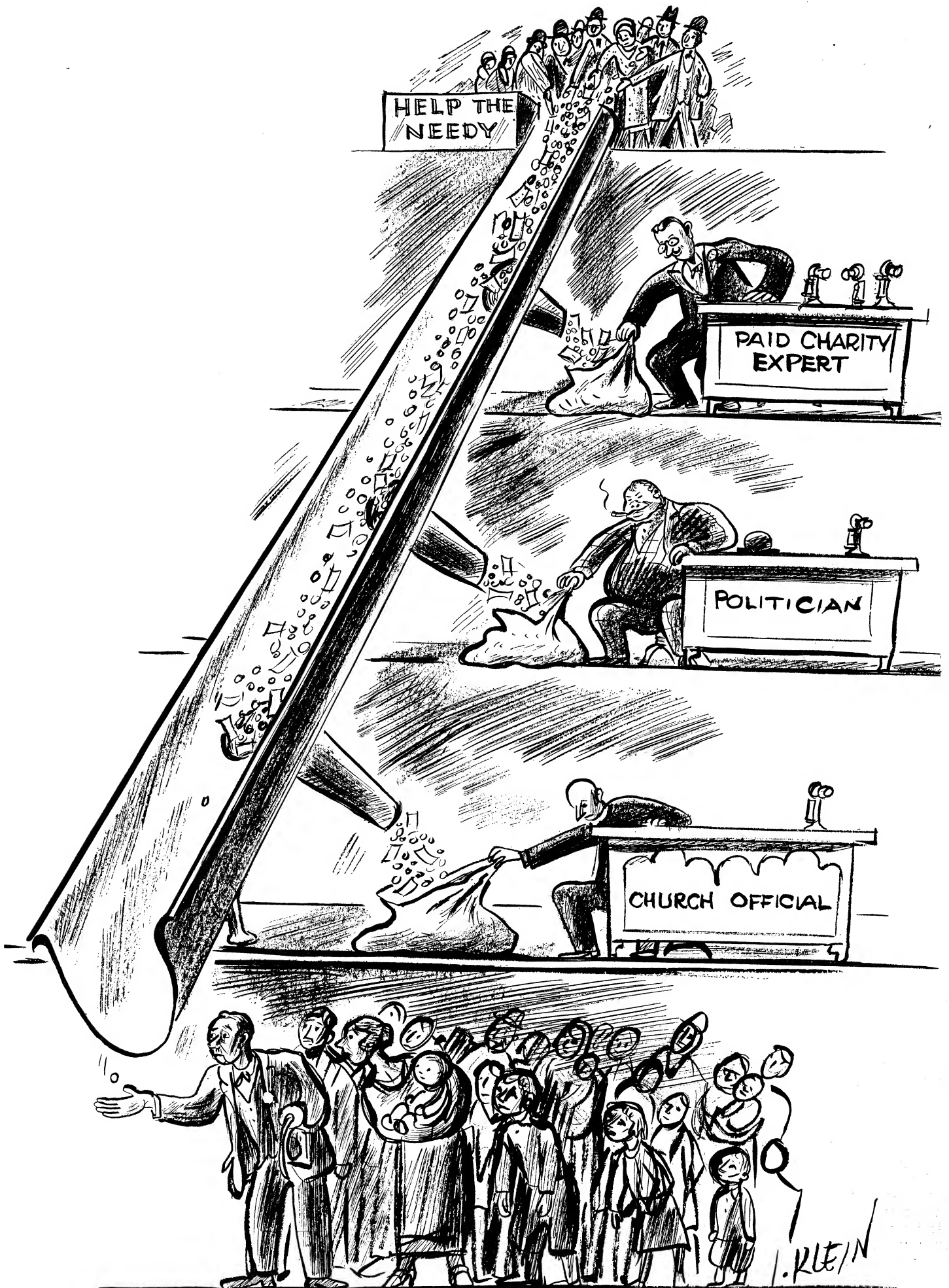
The fact is, that throughout history art has had social roots, has been "propaganda". Propaganda alone does not make art, and Michael Gold knew this when he took the trouble to discuss Wilder's "style"; but form, which turns ideas into art, cannot exist without the ideas and is, in part, determined by them. It is the art-for-art-sakers, the liberal aesthetes, who must defend their *laissez-faire* theory against all of history; for that idea arose under certain historical circumstances, was developed by a definite social class, and has validity only under those circumstances and only for that class. The French romantics who were defending art for art's sake against the classical tyranny of the Academy were the sons or allies of those French businessmen who were yelling for *laissez-faire* and the "rights of man" against the remnants of feudal political tyranny. The war cry "everything is permitted," raised by the romantics, was the echo of the bourgeois battle-cry for free competition, and meant, in the long run, everything is permitted until we are securely entrenched in power.

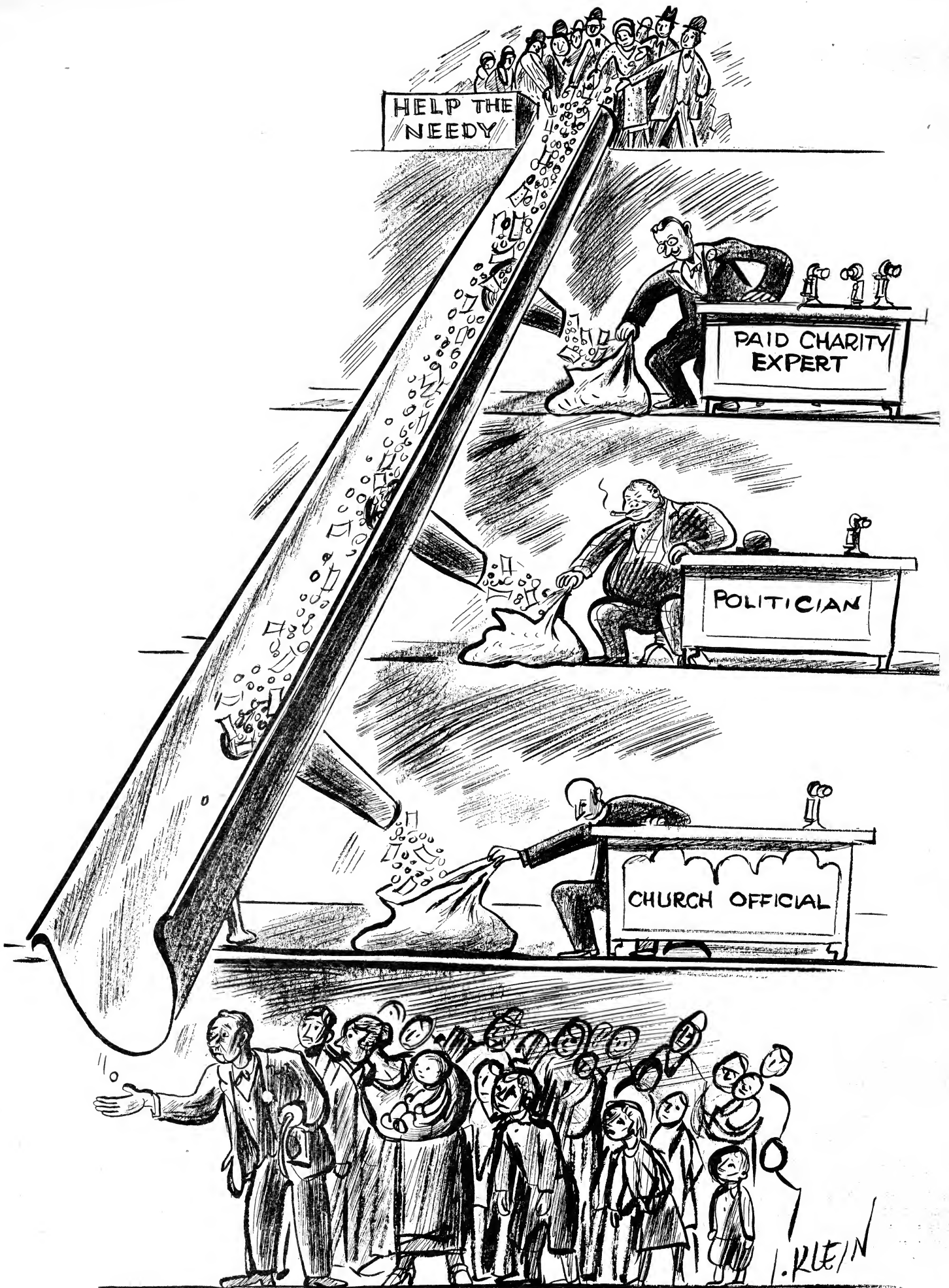
The Communist recognizes the historical validity of the romantic movement, just as he recognizes that in its time bourgeois democracy was a step forward in the evolution of humanity, and that in its time the Catholic Church was a progressive institution. Today, however, bourgeois democracy is a fraud which seeks to cloak war and exploitation, which does not fit the industrial system under which we live; the Catholic Church and all other churches have long outlived their usefulness and are deadly allies of all that is oppressive and poisonous in contemporary civilization; and the art which expressed these historic institutions is no longer adequate to the needs of the mass of humanity, which happens to consist of workers and farmers.

Hazlitt not only distorts Michael Gold's review into Communist propaganda, but hasn't, apparently, taken the trouble to read any Communist literature. Had he done so he would have known that Communists neither reject nor belittle writers like Shakespeare or Aeschylus (both favorites of Karl Marx) or like Pushkin and Tolstoy (both favorites of Lenin). They merely say that those writers created art out of the life and ideas of the governing classes of their time; and that Thornton Wilder creates art out of the life and feelings of the genteel bourgeoisie, to which he belongs; and that revolutionary artists must create art out of the life and ideas of the workers.

It was precisely because Michael Gold's review contained passages, here and there, suggestive of this viewpoint that his liberal critics went wild. He conceded them, as any Communist critic would, historical novels like Scott's and Sue's; the mad titanic delusions of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky; the stormy music of Anglo-Saxon speech a la Shakespeare, Milton, Fielding, Burns, Blake, Byron, Chaucer, and Hardy; he conceded the intoxicated Emerson, the clean rugged Thoreau and the clean Whitman; he even gave them the Holy Rollers, the Baptists, the suicidal stockbrokers, Babbitt and Anita Loos's blonde. Above all he gave them the land of the free and the home of the brave, modern America; he urged Wilder to be the prodigal son, to make the return of the native from far-off Peru, Greece and Italy. What more could the liberal critics and the hysterical ladies want? Nothing, if only Michael Gold hadn't jumped on the genteel bourgeoisie and Anglo-Catholicism and hadn't brought in Ella May Wiggin.

It was that which sent the blood of the "detached" and "fair-minded" liberals shooting up to the boiling point. That was to be expected; and far from supporting the "on the one hand, and on the other hand" brand of liberal criticism, it rather supports the viewpoint of the Communists that literature, like economics, politics, and philosophy, is deeply affected by the struggle of the social classes.





AGNES SMEDLEY

A CHINESE RED ARMY

A young student from a Shanghai university who went to Yochow, Hunan, for his last summer vacation, arrived in his native home a few hours after it had been captured by the 5th Red Army. This student has now written an account of his experiences which, though quite superficial, is the first unbiased account of events taking place in cities or districts captured by the Communist armies in central China.

When he approached Hankow by a river steamer, he threw overboard all modern magazines containing articles on any economic or social subject. Not that he was a Communist or had Communist magazines—but Hankow militarists shoot men for less reason than reading economic articles. The student changed boats at Hankow and reached Chili-shan, where the boat halted for a few hours because they heard shooting in Yochow, two miles away. Nobody knew what had happened, but they thought that perhaps the troops of Ho Chien, the Hunan war-lord, had revolted, or that the "Iron Army" had perhaps returned and captured the city. At last the steamer reached Yochow, and the student left all his baggage on the boat, hid in the grass the few literary magazines of Left writers that he still had with him, and started home. He had spent five days on the steamer, traveling third class, and was dirty and tired. As he entered the gates of the city, he met a vegetable seller and asked: "Is it safe for me to enter this city?" The vegetable seller replied: "Yes—have you just been released from prison?" "No," the student replied, "I have just come by boat from Shanghai—what do you mean by prison?" The vegetable seller: "The Red Army has captured this city and all prisoners have been released." The student: "Is the city being looted?" Vegetable seller: "No. Some shops have opened their doors and carry on their business as usual."

The student's narrative, in his own words, continues:

"I said good-bye to the vegetable seller and walked toward my home. I met many Red soldiers walking through the street. They were young and their uniforms were just the same as those of Government troops, except that each one had a red sign on the left arm. I was unmolested until I put on my long coat which made me look like a bourgeois. Then the Red soldiers turned to look at me with dark glances, and I was suddenly caught by one of them. 'What are you doing here?' he asked. I replied that I had just come from the boat. 'Well, come with me,' he said, and he led me to a building and stood me before another Red soldier and said: 'Comrade Captain—a man has been caught.'"

"The officer, who looked just like the other soldiers, said: 'Sit down, please,' and when I said 'thank you,' and sat down, he sat down also, facing me.

"What is your business?" he began.

"I am a student studying in the ——— University of Shanghai. I just came from the boat." He asked for evidence, and I showed him my medal from the university. He then remarked:

"You are a member of the intellectual class. Of course you are quite clear about our work. What is your attitude? Will you please tell me?"

"I explained to him what I thought and read and then told him that I had left my baggage on the boat and some books in the grass on the river bank. I asked to be permitted to bring these things. He said 'all right,' and took out a small note book and using his leg to write on, wrote:

"This student is just back from Shanghai and he is quite sympathetic with our work. Please let him pass. Note: This passport is effective for 30 minutes. Signed by ———, Captain of the 5th Red Army. July 4th, 1:30 p.m."

"I hurried to the river bank and took my baggage which was in the possession of a friend, found my magazines in the grass and returned to the city without fear. My friend went with me. The streets were filled with small traders, workers, and poor men. They were not afraid of anything, because the Red armies never capture poor men and force them into military service as do Government armies. A Red officer saw us and came up to me and spoke: 'Do you know what kind of troops we are?' 'Yes, I know,' I replied. He then said: 'We are of the Red Army and the Red Army is under the leadership of the Chinese Communist

Party. We are called Communist-bandits—do you understand?' He smiled when he said 'Communist-bandits,' and watched my face. I smiled also and replied: 'Yes. Communist-bandits—I know.' I then showed him my pass good for 30 minutes. He read it and then walked down the street with me. A Red soldier walked by his side and listened closely. This Red soldier finally exclaimed: 'I do not think he is a good man—perhaps he does not understand the real meaning of what you said.' The officer watched me and said nothing. I asked his name, and told him mine and of my studies in Shanghai. He asked: 'Tell us about the present situation in Shanghai; our life is very fierce and we are always moving and fighting from place to place. We can get no newspapers.'

"I told him that the movement in the foreign concessions in support of the Red armies was quite strong and that the intellectuals had gone to the Left during the past two years, and that they publish many books and magazines on the social sciences.

"How about this League of Left-Wing Writers?"

"Many writers have gone into it, and even the great Lu Hsun is a member." (Lu Hsun is China's greatest short-story writer.)*

"Do you know about the *Shanghai Pao* (a Communist daily suppressed many months before)?" I told him I knew it but that it had been suppressed and the *Red Flag Daily* took its place.

"We passed the magistrate's court. Red soldiers were guarding it. We passed the empty prison and saw that the doors had been smashed to pieces. He told me of the Communist prisoners who had been released—they had been in shackles for months and many had died of disease and torture. The other prisoners were poor men imprisoned by the rich. We talked until my pass reached its time limit, but then he lifted his knee and wrote me another that was valid for two hours. He then asked me to come with him to headquarters. Turning over the pass and my baggage to my friend, I told him to go home, while I went with the officer. We passed through crowds of small traders, workers, ricksha men, peddlers and coolies who seemed happy and excited. All walls and doors throughout the city were covered with slogans painted in white: *Workers and peasants, unite! Protect the free trade of poor traders! Poor men never fight poor men! Protect the Soviet army of workers and peasants! Carry out the land revolution! Establish the Soviet of Hunan, Hupeh, and Kiangsi!* The officer explained: 'We have propaganda corps, and after we capture a city, it must be covered with slogans within one hour.'

"The Red Army headquarters was in a primary school. There I was introduced to a young man about 30 years of age, head of the office. After listening to the officer, he looked at me for a long time and then said:

"If you can study in a university, you are at least a *petit bourgeois*. I also came from that class. But the economic background of our class is quite different from that of the proletariat. About all the *petit bourgeois* can do is to give sympathy to the proletariat.' We talked further and he said: 'The aim of the present revolution is to release the workers and peasants from the fierce oppression of the Kuomintang and the imperialists. To do this, our first task is to destroy the Nanking government.' Later he said: 'We are new-comers in this city and unfamiliar with local conditions. We eagerly hope that you will help us arrest the rotten gentry and reactionaries and the local rowdies'.

"At five o'clock I went home to greet my mother. She is an old lady of sixty and we have always been poor. 'This morning the Reds held mass meetings everywhere,' she told me in excitement. 'They told us what they were trying to do—to help the poor, to free the workers and peasants! But they are going to leave within two days!' My old mother had gone to the mass meetings!

"While the Red Army was in our city it burned down the headquarters of the magistrate and the tax office, and no document was left. The Yu Cheng Ching jewelry shop was the only shop burned. It closed its doors when the Red Army asked it to contribute to the revolution. And so the soldiers broke down

*See page 23 for photograph of Lu Hsun and appeal of the Left Wing Writers of China arriving at the moment of going to press.



THE PEACE ANGELS OF EUROPE

Maurice Becker

the door and shouted to the ricksha coolies and other poor men in the streets, saying: 'Come—go into this rich man's shop and take everything you need. Come—this is your only opportunity to get enough to live on until we come again.' The poor men went in and carried out everything from the shop and divided it. The Red soldiers stood at the doors, but they took nothing for themselves, for this is forbidden them.

"The Red soldiers went to all the big rice shops in the city and forced them to post new price lists on all their doors. These notices read:

Order of the Headquarters of the Political Bureau of the 5th Red Army: The responsibility of the Red Army is to free the masses from their suffering and to help them to happiness. Now all food and clothing is kept at such high prices that the masses starve. We have now set prices for food and clothing and any violation of these prices is forbidden. All traders are strictly forbidden to hide their rice, or to change these prices.

"Then followed a list of the five principal articles of food and fuel, rice, cereals, salt, lard, kerosene. Rice was priced at \$2 per picul, although they had been selling it at from \$8 to \$10 before.

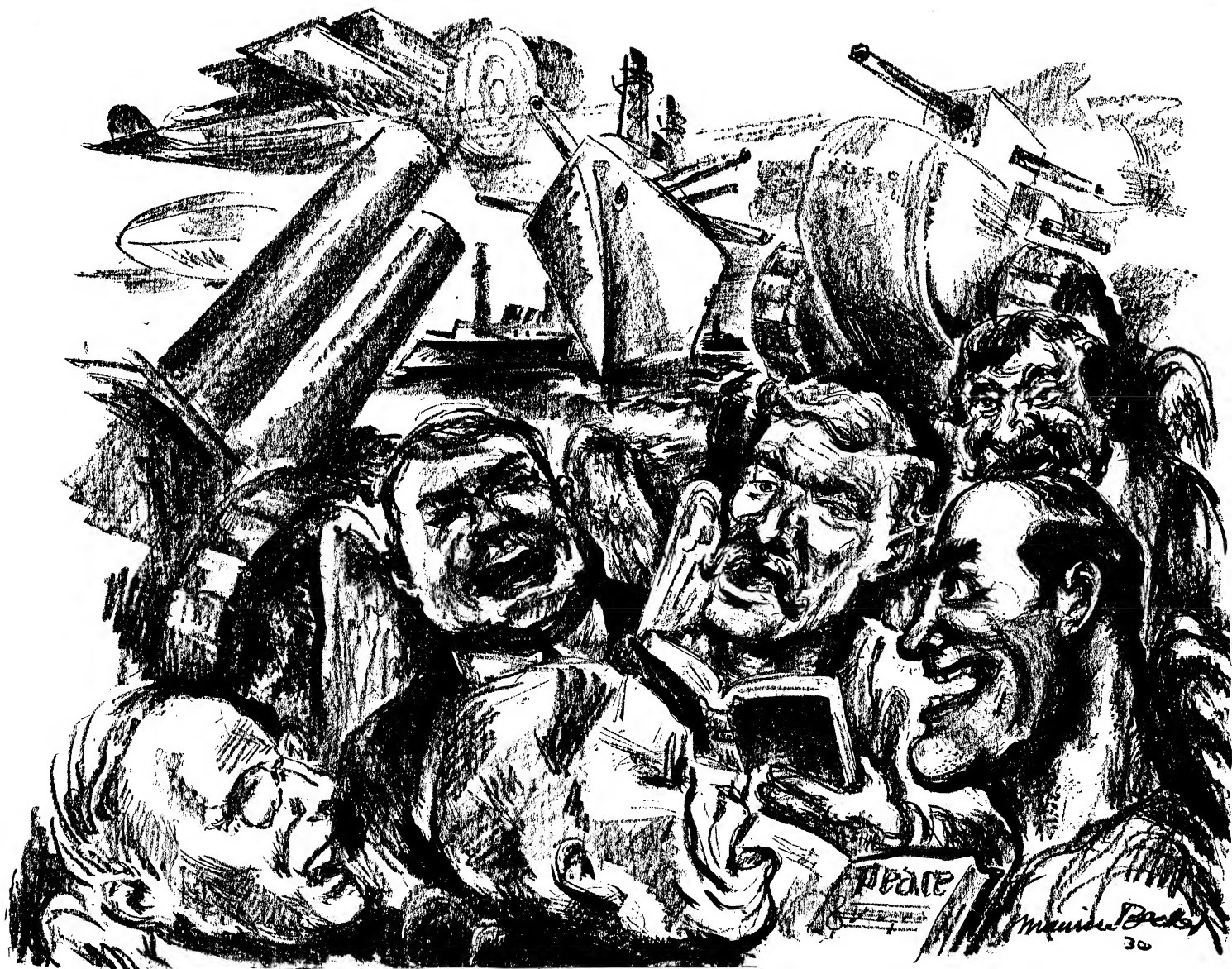
"I talked with crowds of people in all the streets. Everywhere I heard these words: 'I speak from my heart—the Reds are good.' No man was afraid to be pressed into military service, and when they worked for the Red Army they were paid \$1 a day. The Red Army did not live in the homes of the people as do government troops, nor did they demand food and pay nothing.

"An old peasant from a village who had come to Yochow to sell lumber told me a story. There was a lazy, well-to-do man in his village, he said, but this man was kind to the poor. When the Red

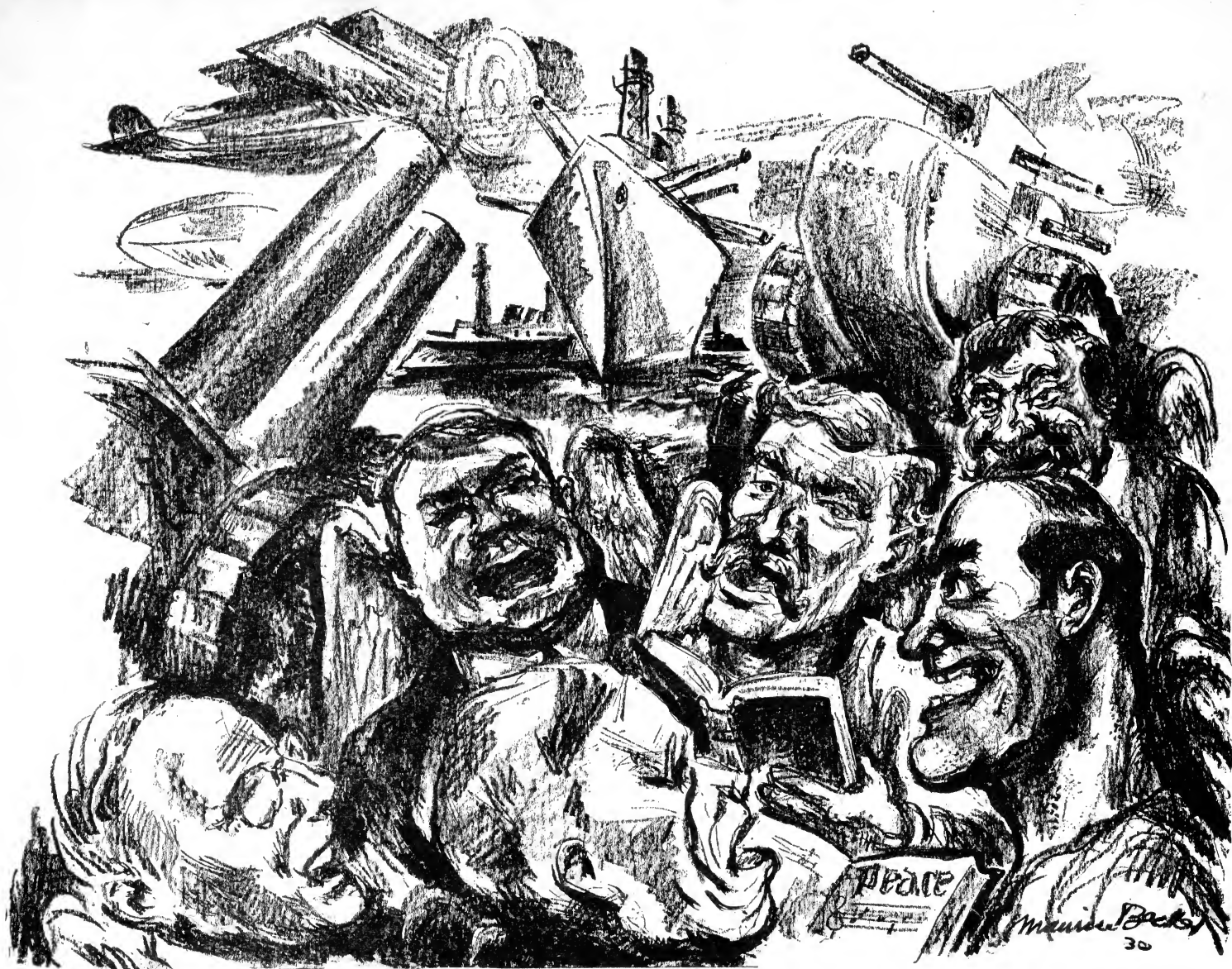
Army took the village, this man was imprisoned. His old wife and relatives went to Red Army headquarters and pleaded for his release, saying he was not a bad man because he had always shared his money and food with the poor. The Red officers told them that if they could bring eighty peasants from the village to witness the truth of their claims and to guarantee his future good conduct, they would believe. After a while the eighty farmers actually came and testified that the man was useless and rich, but, unlike other rich men, he had always shared money and food with the poor. The Red Army released the man. He was astounded to hear that poor peasants who hardly had a rag to their backs had enough power to secure his release. And he stood, held his fat sides, and laughed in his astonishment.

"After a few days the Red Army left Yochow, retreating before the well-armed government troops. The white terror began. The prison doors were repaired and the prison was again filled with the poor. All workers and peasants were suspected because they had done nothing against the Communists. Each day militarists caught suspected men and shot them or hacked their heads off in the public streets. The merchants raised their prices again and only those with a lot of money could afford to eat as much as they needed. The Red Army was gone—but at the end of August when I left Yochow, their slogans were still written on all the city walls, and on all the buildings. It would take months for the government troops to wash them off, and they are too lazy. When I left for Shanghai, I could read from a long distance the slogan on a wall—*Establish the Soviet Government of Hunan, Hupeh and Kiangsi!*"

SHANGHAI, CHINA,



THE PEACE ANGELS OF EUROPE



THE PEACE ANGELS OF EUROPE

Maurice Becker



Otto Soglow

DEFENSE ATTORNEY: "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I appeal to your patriotism. How can you believe all the vile slander against this man who has been a most helpful friend of our noble mayor, and all the leading citizens of our fair city?"

REVERY ON THE ANGLO-SAXOPHONE

By Murray Godwin

"Individualist—the Literary Guild Is Meant For You . . .
 Hundreds of letters in our files
 Say . . . 'I thought the Guild . . .
 But if it has courage enough to give its members
 The heterodox Ford Madox Ford,
 The—to say the least—"robust" Jim Tully,
 The erudite D. B. Wyndham Lewis
 And the blasphemous and lecherous Aldous Huxley,
 YOU CAN COUNT ME IN!"

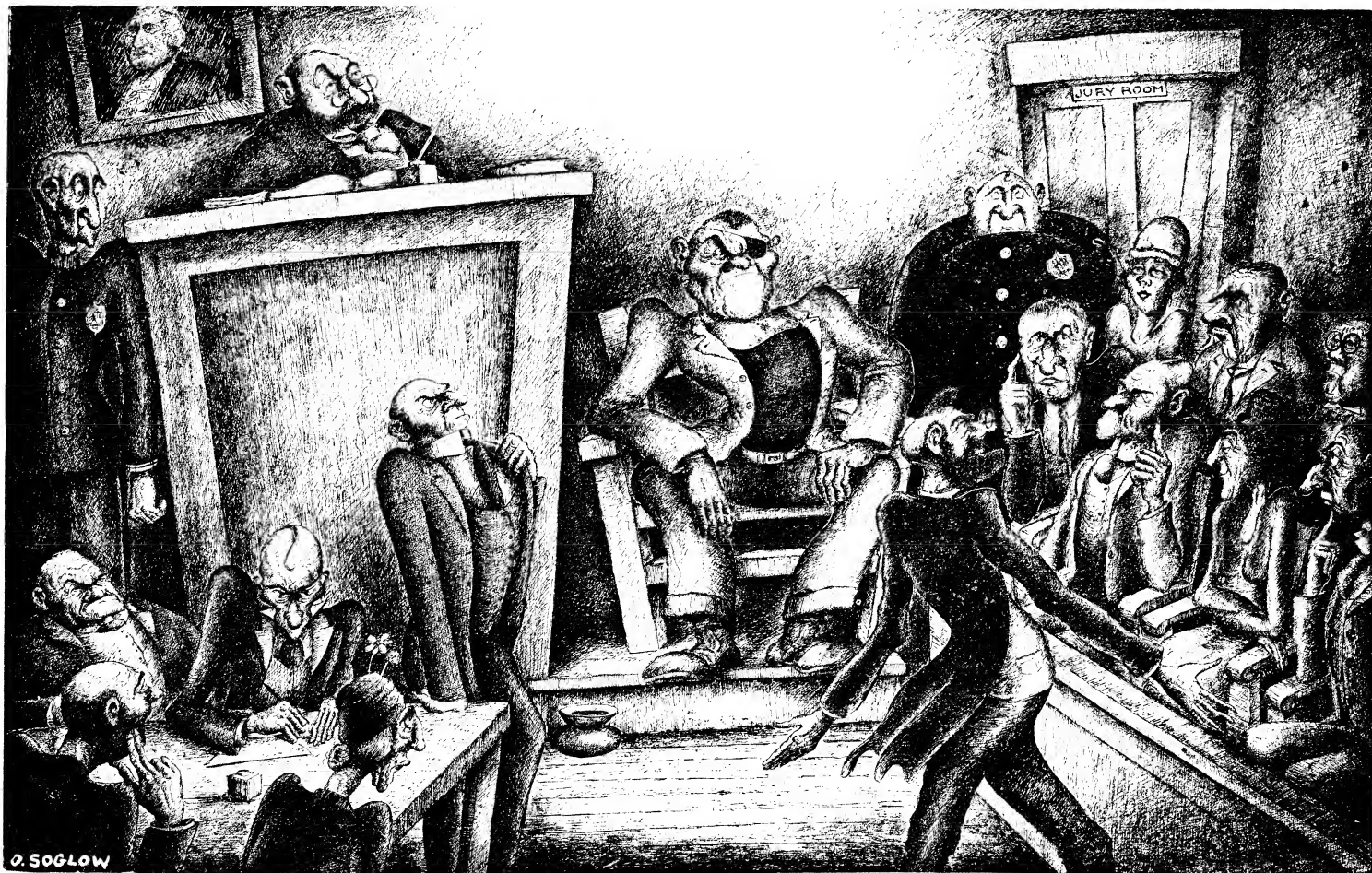
Christmas Eve, seventeen-seventy-something,
 A bunch of the boys—cold sober, especially cold—
 Robbed their feet to make breech-covers
 And formed a line . . . Leatherhides from Marblehead
 Manned the boats, thrust away the icecakes, oaring dark pools
 Through the shatter of white . . . Mrs. Bitch
 Heard her impersonal sons mentioned
 Many times that evening,
 Before the slow-going column-of-fours
 Stood complete on the Jersey side.

Case-hardened hellfire,
 The great Virginian sat apart
 Until the last cold-stunned leatherass
 Got a handhold and swung his numbed dogs into place
 Beside the last gun . . . Then, "Ha'ch!"—
 The infantry with ice behind their ears,
 The artillery and the corps of engineers
 Moved, and the caissons went rolling along . . .
 "Fall out and you're done"—the rear guard
 Bit the joint of its trigger finger and worked its toes
 To keep the preventive personnel intact . . . Tracking red
 Where the snowcrust broke and bit,
 Raked by a steady frontal storm of sleet,

The outfit slogged up to Trenton
 To crash the gate at a *Weihnachtsabend* party . . .
 They say the General,
 His frozen face like granite,
 Waved aside the slowmatch of the cannoneer,
 And opened the ball by spitting in the touch-hole.

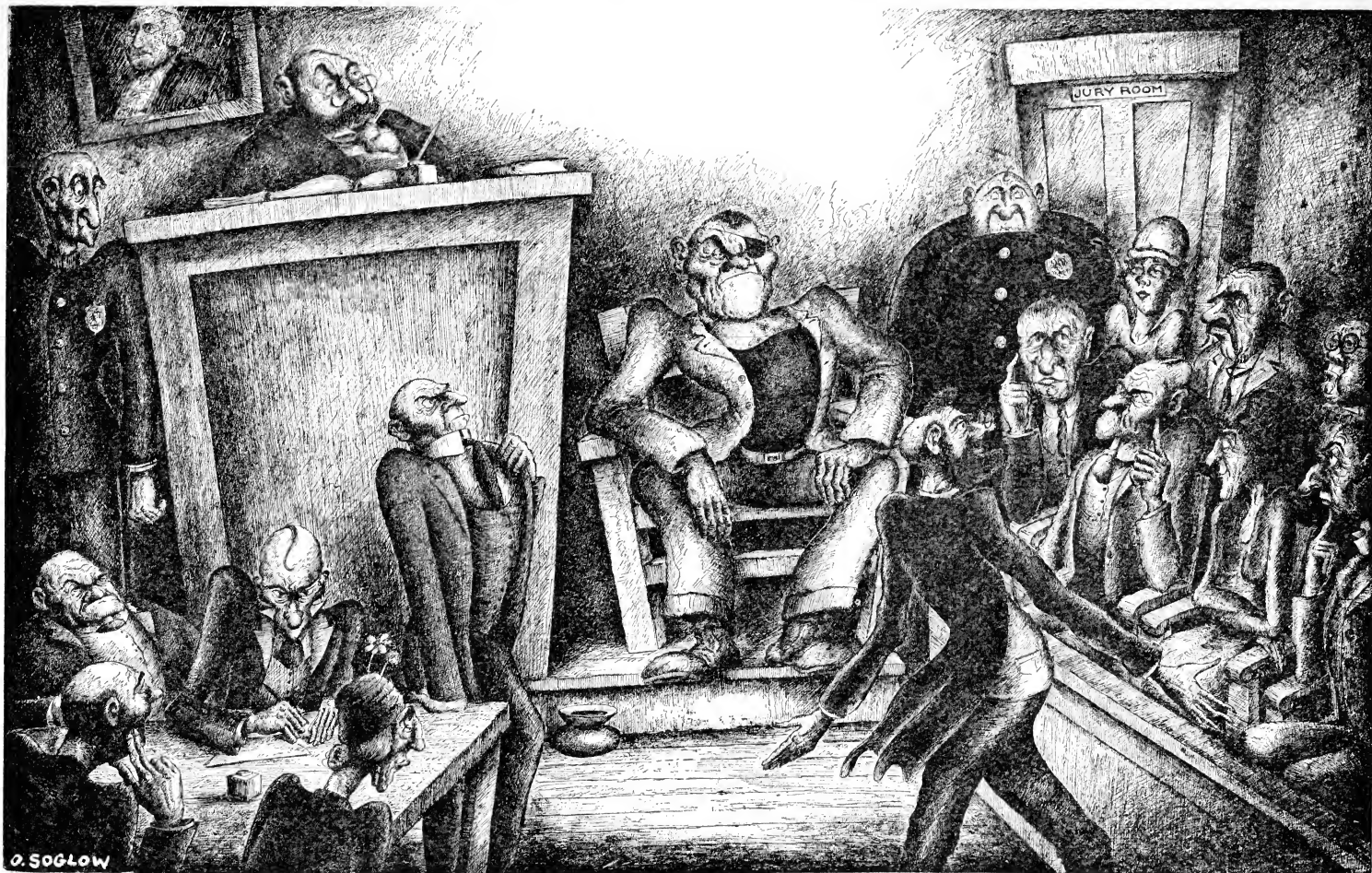
Christmas, nineteen-twenty-eight,
 A little group of earnest Liberals,
 Having said unkind things about Secretary Mellon,
 Repaired in portentous silence beyond the suburbs
 And upset eleven privies . . . The Tree of Liberty
 Will always flourish best
 When sodded with the manure of tyrants.

Abraham Lincoln decided that these States
 Constituted a forced federation
 And made it stick . . . A. Mitchell Palmer
 Cold-cocked arrest by warrant, and the necessity
 Of placing a charge against a man in order to hold him;
 Did away with free speech, assemblage, press;
 Introduced *agents provocateurs* and *lettres de cachet*
 In a Big Way—put 'em across with a Bang.
 Then Harry Daugherty (of the Ohio Daughertys)
 Applied injunction to American Individualism
 By prosecutions for contempt of court.
 Nervous Nellie Kellogg persuaded the Press
 To gossip garrulously, groundlessly, anonymously
 Of the treachery of a neighboring republic,
 So that the way of the State Department
 Might be prepared in a manner in harmony
 With its essential nature . . . Then federal judges
 Abolished trial by jury to save time
 And uncertainty; and federal agents,



Otto Soglow

DEFENSE ATTORNEY: "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I appeal to your patriotism. How can you believe all the vile slander against this man who has been a most helpful friend of our noble mayor, and all the leading citizens of our fair city?"



O. SOGLOW

Otto Soglow

DEFENSE ATTORNEY: "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I appeal to your patriotism. How can you believe all the vile slander against this man who has been a most helpful friend of our noble mayor, and all the leading citizens of our fair city?"

Finding the times ripe and protection sure,
Advanced to a new standard of conduct
Whereby their badges served to distinguish them
From thugs unauthorized . . . Whereupon
Some scores of kissbreech Servants of the People
Upstrained their puffball souls
To imitate . . . approve . . . commend . . .

"Do these aliens who seek citizenship in Our Country
Believe in Our Institutions as they are,
Or in Our Institutions as they would wish them to be?
It is important to the Welfare of America
That we know" . . . Thus writes the collective editor
Of the Greatest Newspaper in the Mid-West . . .
And in the interest of one-nineteenth of the Constitution
The Reverend Clergy proclaim Loyalty Sunday . . . "Whoever you
are!

How can I but offer you divine leaves, that you also be eligible
as I am?

How can I but as here chanting, invite you for yourself to collect
Bouquets of the incomparable feuillage of these States?"

"We hold these truths to be self-evident
That all men are created equal;
That they are endowed by their Creator
With certain inalienable rights;
That among these are life, liberty,
And the pursuit of happiness . . . That to secure these rights,
Governments are instituted among men,
Deriving their just powers
From the consent of the governed."

Oh Valiant Less-than-Half-of-One-Percent of Us,
Burdened with More-than-Nine-Tenths of the Income Tax—
Greetings from Us, the Tax-Free Eighty-Two Percent—
And reassurances . . . Be not fearful of Democracy:
Minority though you are, you are not less than we
Under the Great Manifesto . . . Come with us, Citizens.
Forlorn Hope the Census may make you; to Us, singly and in-
dividually, you are Equals . . . Come with us, Citizens.

Let us together realize on our Rights Inalienable:
First, Life—between grandsire and grandson,
Behold, we make place for you in the Breadline,
Shuffling vertebrate tail of the Crash of October,
Creeping Christmastide wreath setting off for the season
The terraced piles of Our Progress, valued at Hundreds of Millions
Including the Sacrosanct Land which they rest on . . .
Come with us, Citizens, who do not labor and are not burdened,
to the door where Life awaits

With a bun and a slug of mud for what ails you . . . Ah, Life
Inalienable—

Lure that links our line, that leads us lamely on
When shadows fall on our encircling gloom, and an oppressive
emptiness seems to say it ain't no use—

Lead thou us on . . . to a bun and a slug of mud for what ails
you . . .

Come with us, Citizens—
This Life with which the Creator has endowed us—
You are entitled to it as much as we . . .

Next, Liberty—free are we to walk the streets who can,
And free are you, likewise . . . Come with us, Citizens,
And get gypped for a job. Fair field and no favor, every man's
as good as the next,

And the Morgue'll get the hindmost . . . Or come to the Square
For a free assemblage, where Justice, with both eyes open
And a blue chin, freely bestows its hickory or shotged favors,
Its free trips in the Wagon, to the Island or even the Potter's
Field . . . This Freedom—

Come and get it; it is yours no less than our own . . . Come with
us, Citizens.

Let us together pursue our rightful Happiness . . . Watch your
chance,

Duck under the turnstile when you hear the train approach; take a
header past the guard, into the pit . . .

Or Happiness is *there*, where the woven cable reaches its peak



ONE LESS TO FEED

William Gropper

above a pier, if you prefer it . . . Up, then look straight down.
Or by your leave, let's to a rope, on which to hang our Highest
Hope
Of Happiness; but tie it fast . . . We want our Happiness to last.
And always, always, we want it to be yours as much as our own.

Allons, Citoyens . . . These Inalienable Rights
Are secured us—and you no less than us—by a Government
Which in this day of specialization
Derives its powers from the consent of a Power Trust . . . and
which,
To insure that they are not loosed,
Sends forth endowed the Fakeriot Fish
To snare the Babbittry a dish of Good Red Herring;
And which to swell the Leisured Parade
Of Freeborn Men, and Unafraid,
Completes the dearth of foreign trade, for fear of erring.
Oh Noble Bargemen of the Ship of State, sail on,
Preserve the Right, but do not heed the Left—
That Submerged Tenth disgruntled—nay, bereft;
Up native manganese, down alien growls erratic.
Make all days Fish Days—*toujours de l'audace!*
Brave the wind's eye—no tacks—no volte-face . . .
Only Tsars exit *via* automatic.

"Individualist—the Literary Guild Is Meant For You . . .
Hundreds of letters in our files
Say . . . 'I thought the Guild . . .
But if it has courage enough to give its members
The heterodox Ford Madox Ford,
The—to say the least—"robust" Jim Tully,
The erudite D. B. Wyndham Lewis
And the blasphemous and lecherous Aldous Huxley,
YOU CAN COUNT ME IN!"



ONE LESS TO FEED

William Gropper

Edward Newhouse

New York to New Orleans*

Bumming through the South.

"Times is bad, sah," said the Negro tenant farmer at whose hovel I spent one night in Alabama.

"We cain't go like this. They's taking the land from under our feet," I was told by a mountaineer in Tennessee.

"The current depression is characterized by an unprecedented intensity as well as a disconcerting duration," stated a Yale professor who gave me a lift in his roadster.

"It's the economic law of supply and demand," was the comment of the hosiery salesman whose Chrysler I flagged just outside of Washington.

I rode with this boy at breakneck speed for over two hundred miles. The car skidded at every turn and we were averaging at least seventy miles an hour. But he kept lighting cigarettes and talking. It would be vain for me to try to capture his mannerisms and dialect.

But one thing was evident. Here was the incarnation of all the forces radicals are up against in the South. Class-conscious individualism, aggressive stupidity and fighting ignorance. Darrow, free love, Foster, Lenin, Bolsheviki . . . these mingled in his mind to form a solid mass, a mass which was to be resisted with all his efforts and the resistance to which had become little more than a reflex action.

I got him started on the subject and there was no necessity for further encouragement. He discussed capital punishment and expounded the "eye-for-an-eye-tooth-for-a-tooth" theory. He spoke of nationalization of women in Russia, of kulaks crucified, broken on the wheel. The Gastonia strike was described as the wanton shooting of Chief Aderholt.

"Why there's four thousand of 'em striking at Danville today. Now I tell you that boss-man treated them like they was his own children and they come back and walk all over him. Shoot 'em on sight or string 'em up, that's what I say and there's right smart Southerners that agree with me. The government's too easy with them."

There's a long pause, night is coming on, the motor purrs gently and sentiment gushes.

"Gee, I can't wait to see my girl again. Haven't heard from her in a month. Boy, to hold those little hands again and look into those blue eyes. I'm gonna take her to the football game tomorrow if it don't rain. Duke versus Carolina. Think Carolina got a chance? I'm a Duke man, you know."

"—'You went to college?' This with a badly disguised note of amazement.

"Sure, class of '24."

"—'No, I don't think Carolina has a chance. Duke has a fine, fighting team this year.'" (Voice inside: Better be good to this guy, Mr. Newhouse. He took you up in Alexandria and is taking you past Richmond. Besides Duke *has* a good team.)

He puts me off at Durham.

"Sorry, I can't go further with you, big boy. I'd like to go to Mexico myself. Good luck!"

"Thanks, I'll need it."

Durham, North Carolina: Hicktown with Main Street, Kress store, First National Bank, college, unemployment, advertisements, blankness.

I wander into the Five and Ten and start reading a movie magazine on the counter. The movies . . . Greta Garbo, The Woman of Mystery, "whose eyes speak of the age-old tragedy of woman." Whoopee! Jim Tully, the shaggy, fighting Irishman, writes of Ruth Chatterton and is ever so iconoclastic and heywoodbroun-ish. The promiscuous Miss Bow has gotten herself a new boyfriend. Gary Cooper and Lupe Velez are happy as ever.

The vivid girl behind the counter comes over and asks, "Like the movies?"

"—'No.'"

"Hikin' ".

"—'No. Bumming.'" (Pretty girl. Nice shape.)

"Go on. You ain't no bum."

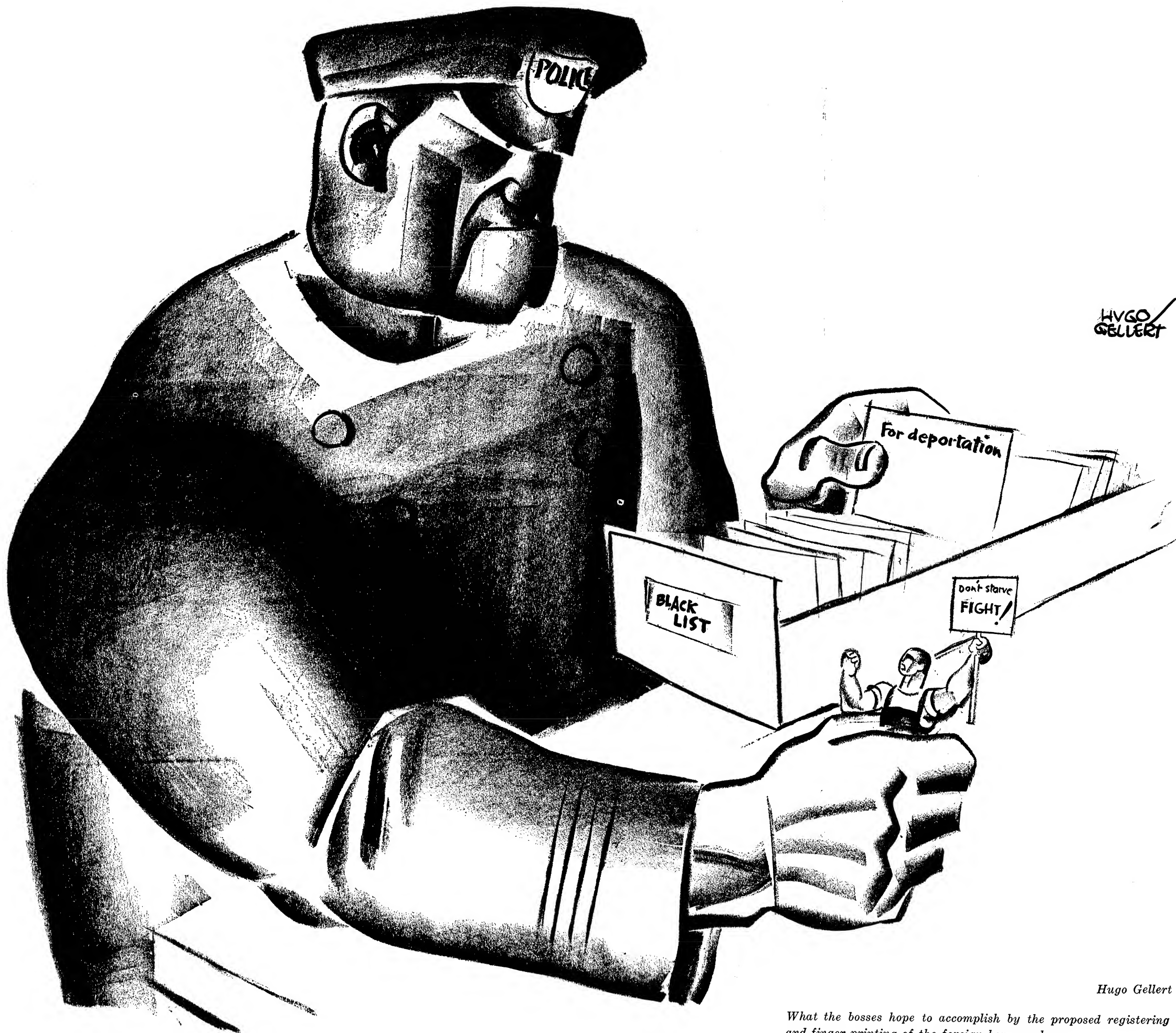
"—'Yes, I am. I don't know where I'm going to sleep tonight.'" (But I got a good hunch. Some looker!)

*EDITORS: This is as faithful an account as I can give of a few days on the bum in the South. I'm writing this in the New Orleans Salvation Army flophouse where they don't furnish typewriters. Hope to ship to Vera Cruz this week. More later.—E.N.



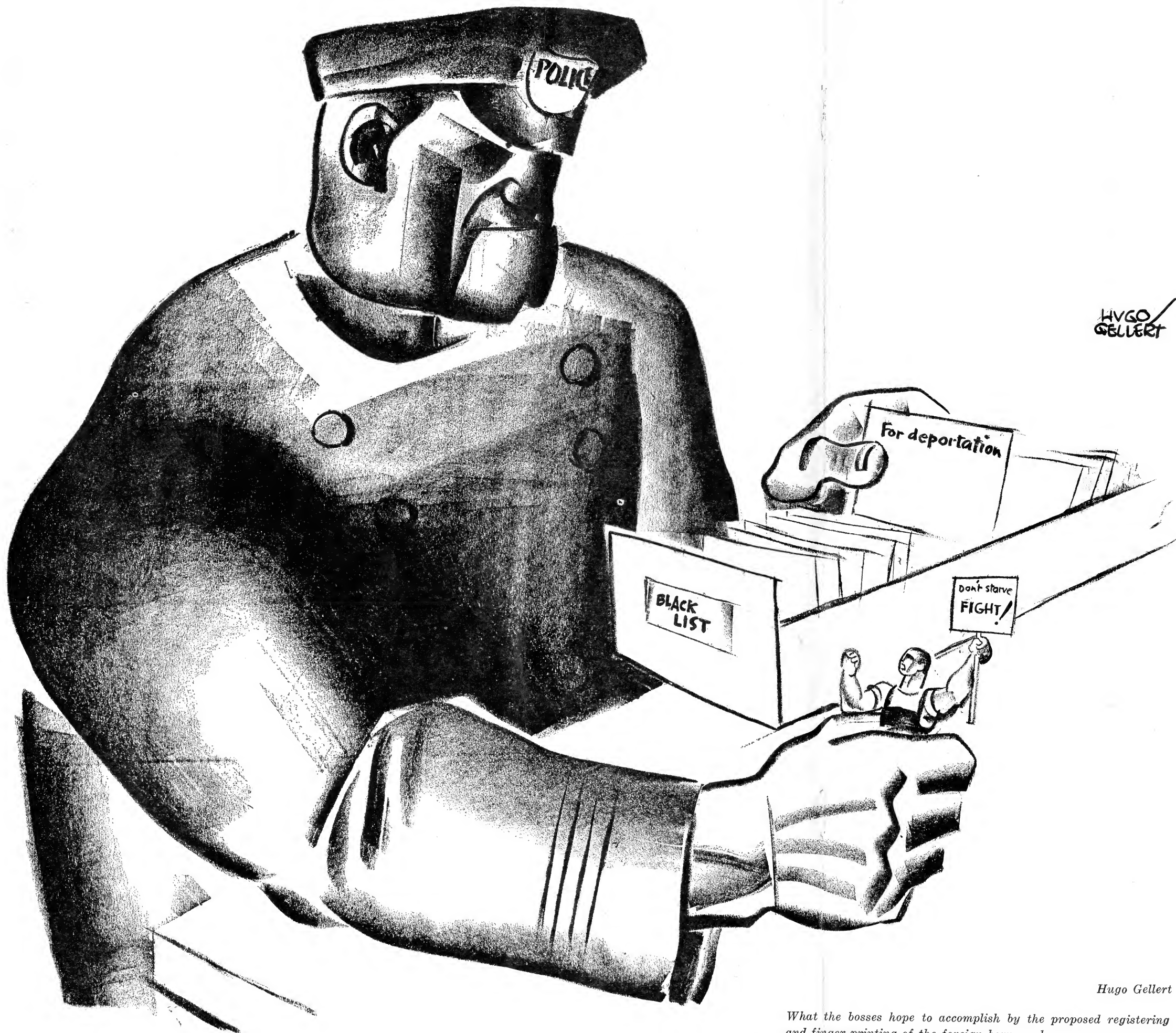
Hugo Gellert

What the bosses hope to accomplish by the proposed registering and finger printing of the foreign born workers.



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EVICTED

William Siegel

"Oh, we'll find you a place. Where you from?"

—"New York." (The best smile in the repertory.)

The inevitable badinage. Lights going out all around the store.

"Wait for me outside."

Her house is a midwest affair, one story, shutters and all. The stairs are rickety and I step gingerly.

"It's allright," she says "I live alone."

She makes coffee, brings doughnuts, jam. I eat like a horse and wipe the makeup off her face with the napkin.

—"You've got lovely eyes," in the midst of the process.

"Stop that. I know they're too narrow. Everybody says so."

—"Well, be that as it may, due to certain conditionings in my background I'm so constituted that to me they seem pretty."

"What?" she said, sitting into my lap.

The next day: A sedan, a freight train, a few miles of walking, two trucks and Charlotte, N. C.

Football scores bawled from a radio store. Colgate 7, N Y U 6 . . . Duke 0, Carolina 0 . . . If one could only write an adequate story of a big game, the delirium of a sixty yard run, the secret of the game's success, sociological background and all . . . Notre Dame 27, Southern California 0.

Charlotte is quite cosmopolitan in spots, something like parts

of 170th St. in the Bronx. "Sandwich" is no longer misspelled as it was through the country and there's a lot of noise.

A torrent of crazy life rushes past you. Shop windows, automobiles, snatches of conversation, advertisements. Oh, those inane, omnipresent, viciously calculated ads. Up and coming young men, with impeccably adjusted cravats take evening courses at the Y. M. C. A. in applied psychology. And they write "A six in the price range of the four." "A word to the wives is sufficient"—ads are the ugly old crutches of a superannuated economy.

A youngish bum asks me for a quarter.

—"Can the boloney, bud. Where's a flopjoint."

"Just a minute, fella. I'm going there m'self. B'right witcha."

Evidently he sighted some easy mark. It was a woman with a child. He got his quarter allright and returned.

"Come on with me."

He walked into McCrory's and bought a bottle of bay rum.

We went to the Salvation Army together. Before we entered he drank the bay rum and smashed the bottle on the sidewalk.

The registering room. Name, nearest relative's name and address, where were you born, when, profession, where you going, where'd you sleep last night? Take your shower.

The shower room. No hot water yet and everybody's waiting. Perhaps forty men, about a dozen of them professional bums, the rest unemployed workers, bewildered, bitter.

Just as high school boys speak about homework and baseball scores, just as writers speak about advances and royalties, so we speak about jobs and freights and miles.

"Took a hotshot in Kansas City and grabbed the southern last night. But it ain't no use. You go West, you meet guys coming East, you go South, you meet guys going North. There ain't no more jobs in this country. There's just dicks and chaingangs. I did over a thousand miles in little more than a week and I'm just about ready to join the army."

"The army", grunts a slim, dirty bo, streched out on the floor, "I bin in the army over eleven years. I was in France an' China an' Siberia. If you said you'd take what flesh I got offa me bit by bit with hot pincers, I'd say go ahead but I won't join your goddam army." He is trembling violently.

—"There's going to be another war," I put in.

"If there is, I'll steal enough dough to buy me a gat—a good one. An' I'll go to Washington, to Congress an' just shoot as many Senators as I can. I'm shellshocked, gassed and there's still a bit of shrapnel right here . . . I'd be willin' to do that other little thing for my country."

I launch into an exposition.

"Take yer showers," grunts the trusty.

The men undress slowly, reluctantly. Macabre motions, crackling of lice. Horrible socks held up to the showers. Gnarled fingers and twisted glances scraping at sores. . . .

The beds: A sheet and the remains of a blanket.

The men talk of jobs and freights and miles. There are attempts at humor. They laugh coughingly.

A spasm of silence. Then suddenly a tall stiff, an Oklahoma cowpuncher, says—

"There's a revolution coming in this country, sure as two and two is four."

The slim soldier says, "I'll drill 'em a company of volunteers."

BLOOD AND IRON

*Have you ever caught a red hot chip
Somewhere between the navel and the lip?
Did you lose an eye when a piece of steel
Flew from the goddamned emery wheel?
Did the Foreman use a gold toothpick
And bum a chew of Piper Heidsick
Saying Climax gave him heartburn?
Did the pulley lathe chatter and turn
And the miller grunt and stew
Because the mandrel was out of true?
Does the memory linger
Of your lost finger?
Have you ingrown fears
Of unprotected gears?
Then you are, Bo, since you insist,
A sometime lousy machinist.*

H. J. KRIER.





A CRISIS IN THE HALO BUSINESS

I. Klein

A Letter from Europe

Dear Editors:

Getting the monthly copy of *New Masses* in Europe is always a big event. Especially in Italy—this cancerous tangle of fascism. In Germany *New Masses* was just another Communist magazine, a little too heady and naive for the Germans, for whom Communism is a smoothly operated machine, working, planning, and promising to be ready with the goods when Hitler and his kidney make the final plunge. The Communists I met there were men and women who gave you the sure feeling that when the big turn-over arrived each of them would be efficiently ready to operate in the collectivist state.

Germany is no song, though! Last summer I bummed through the Mansfeld copper mining district, stopping here and there in gasthauser to talk with the miners. There had been a strike going for six weeks. Things looked pretty bad. There were men everywhere in little groups, talking, trying to laugh, bucking one another up. I asked one of them about wages in the mines. He said that the ordinary wage was 18RM (\$4.50) a week. But that was in the good days, the men hastened to interrupt. At the time, the bosses were "considering" a 15% wage-cut!

There were thousands of Germans tramping the highways between the industrial centers looking for work. I talked with many of them. It was always the same. From Hamburg to Berlin to Leipzig to Frankfurt to the Ruhr endlessly. Tomorrow and tomorrow. It was always the same. I met one young fellow whose smile was not twisted with worry. He played the mouth-harp for us and his companions sang, staving off hunger. He said there was a job waiting for him but the rest of the men later assured me he was *verrückt*, a little off. Most of the men travel

hopelessly in bands. The younger and less weary often try it alone. Many of them are without shoes; the rest wear open sandals with wooden soles. They sleep in the barns and live by begging from the wary peasants who cannot understand the paradox of the prosperity vaunted in the Hitlerite press and these endless troupes of misery.

Germany is bad but there is there a growing potential Communism, and after that, Italy is a damned sorry sight. On every bare wall-space whether it be home, office, shop, bank or railroad station—lining every street—there are stencil-paintings of the glaring Duce. He has broadcast his photos to be sold in every shop, maniacal pictures of arrogance and napoleonic will. And the pictures are bought. If anybody tells you that the Latins love Mussolini and his despotism they are suffering from 19th century sentimentality (there are such!). The people are silent; when you evince interest in the portrait of the Duce (you see him in every store!) they do not smile. They are cowed. The best proof of this fear is that on not one of the thousands of stencil-paintings I have seen could I ever find a single humorous touch, a single caricature added by peasant good-nature. There is no monkey business. Things were bad enough under the old regime, but somehow the people, the masses, the peasants managed to be cheerful, to laugh. Now—the sunshine has gone out of Italy.

But the Communists are at work here too! German comrades told me of hand-presses smuggled into the country for the printing of workers' pamphlets. An old sailor here who is a good radical tells me with a wink that things can't last long. His is the voice of the people!

Capitalistic Europe is plainly and politely going to hell!

DON MCKENZIE.

Lago di Garda, Italy.



A CRISIS IN THE HALO BUSINESS

LAWRENCE GELLERT

NEGRO SONGS OF PROTEST*

A lullaby I heard near Tyron, N. C.

*Sh-hhhhhh baby
Hushabye
Sleep soun' li'l baby
Make yo' big an' strong
Maybe so strong
You have same's white folks
All nice things
Sh-hhhhhh baby
Hushabye
Sleep soun' li'l baby.*

I heard a washerwoman striding along the road with a bundle of laundry balanced on her head sing this. The tune was in quick march tempo—loud and free. She sang it with an abandon of exultation and joy difficult to describe.

<i>Shout Oh chillun</i>	<i>We gwine own de hoe</i>
<i>Shout yo' free</i>	<i>An' own de plow</i>
<i>Now you has yo' liberty</i>	<i>An own de han' dat hol'</i>
<i>Yo' no mo' slabe</i>	<i>We sell de pig, de horse, de cow</i>
<i>Yo' free, free, free</i>	<i>But neber mo' chile be sol'</i>

Here's one from Greenville, S. C. The five tone scale through which the Negro expresses himself almost as easily as we do in speech is used in the melody. The listener unconsciously humps his shoulders under the impact of a pressing object of great weight, so remarkable is the Negro's skill in creating and imparting his moods in song. The mournful atmosphere in the opening lines is carried throughout. The apparently hopeful note in the chorus lines is not borne out in the tune. More derisive and ironic than anything else.

*Nigger he jes' patch black dirt
Raisin' paht de white man's Eart'
Lawd cain' you hear him groan an' weep
White man's aplowin' his'n soul down deep*

*Nigger shall be free, yes
Nigger shall be free, yes
Nigger, shall be free, yes
When de good Lawd set him free*

A tray boy in an Asheville, N. C., sanatorium sang this one. The tune is light, lively—flippant even. Not at all in keeping with the lament and plaintiveness with which the lines are burdened. It may be that the words are a parody on others—more cheerful—about love perhaps or whiskey.

*White man go to college
Nigger to the fiel'
White man learn to read an' write
Nigger axe to wiel'
Well it makes no dif'rence how you make out yo' time
White folks sure to bring de nigger out behin'*

*Ain' it hahd, ain' it hahd
Ain' it hahd to be a nigger, nigger, nigger,
Ain' it hahd, ain' it hahd
Cause you neber get yo' money when it due*

*If a nigger get 'rested an' cain' has his fine
Dey sen' him out to work on de county line
Nigger an' white man playin' seben up
Nigger win de money, fraid to pick it up
He work all de week, he work all de time
White folks sure to bring de nigger out behin'*

Ain' it hahd (etc)

*These songs are part of a collection gathered over a period of two years by the author, in North and South Carolina and Georgia. They are now being arranged for publication. The first group of these songs, appeared under the same title in our November issue.

When a local administrative body contemplates reelection—and when do they not—maintenance of good roads is an excellent asset. These roads are kept in repair by chain gangs. Work on them of course is in proportion to the number of convicts available. Hence no crime goes long unpunished. Not if there can be found a stray Negro within a hundred mile radius.

The convict at work wears the usual chain and ball. In special cases where he is able to raise shackle bond—at the rate of some \$25.00 per month sentence—the shackle is removed. He works without it. They hope he runs away. Certainly he has every opportunity. The bond is forfeited. Clear profit. They can always get another to fill his place. The sheriff takes a walk and jostles a Negro—preferably an out-of-town one (no white friends to butt in). An arrest is made. Disorderly conduct. That's good for at least 90 days.

As a Spartanburg County (S.C.) judge expressed it, "I'm willing to give the nigger the benefit of the 'knout' every time." He wasn't joking. Merely stating a fact. And the sentiment is usual with Southern petty officialdom everywhere.

The song following is in that vein:

*Standin' on de corner, wan' doin' no hahm
Up come a 'liceman grab me by de ahm
Blow a li'l whistle, ring a li'l bell
Here come de 'rol wagon runnin' lak Hell*

*Jedge he call me up an' axe mah name
Ah tol' him fo' sho' ah wan' to blame
He wink at de 'liceman, 'liceman wink too
Jedge he say ah git some work to do.*

*Workin' on de road gang shackle boun'
Lon' lon' time fo' six mont' roll roun'
Miserin' fo' mah honey, she miserin' fo' me
But lawd white folks won' let go o' me.*

A workday song. A new verse crops up everytime it's sung. There must be hundreds of them. This version I heard in Mills Springs, N. C.

*He work so hahd
Jes' fo' gettin' 'head
But he were cross-eyed
An' fill white folks' pocket 'stead
Ain' dat de truff*

*Ef nigger work hahd
He worked out fo' long
An' white folks only wan' him
When he stay strong
Ain' dat de truff*

*Pickin' off de cotton
Hoein' up de cawn
Ah neber does mo'
Den ah's paid fo' doin,
Ain' dat de truff*

*De hahdes' workin' nigger
Ah eber done saw
Now goin' 'roun' beggin,
He cain' work no mo'
Ain' dat de truff*

*Pickin' off de cotton
Hoein' up de cawn
Ah's de lazies' nigger
Sho' 's yo' bawn
Ain' dat de truff.*

I heard fragments of the next one in both Carolinas. It's a good, lively work song.* Whenever whites happen to be about other lines are conveniently substituted:

*Ah tol' mah Cap'n mah han' was col'
Goddamn yo' han' let de wheelin roll*

*Ah tol' mah Cap'n mah feet was col'
Goddamn yo' feet let de wheelin roll*

*Cap'n, Cap'n, you mus' be blin'
Look at yo' watch it pas' quittin' time*

*Cap'n, Cap'n how can it be
Whistle done blow an' you still workin' me*

*Another version of this song appeared in our May 1930 issue, in the article: Songs of the Negro Worker by Phillip Schatz.

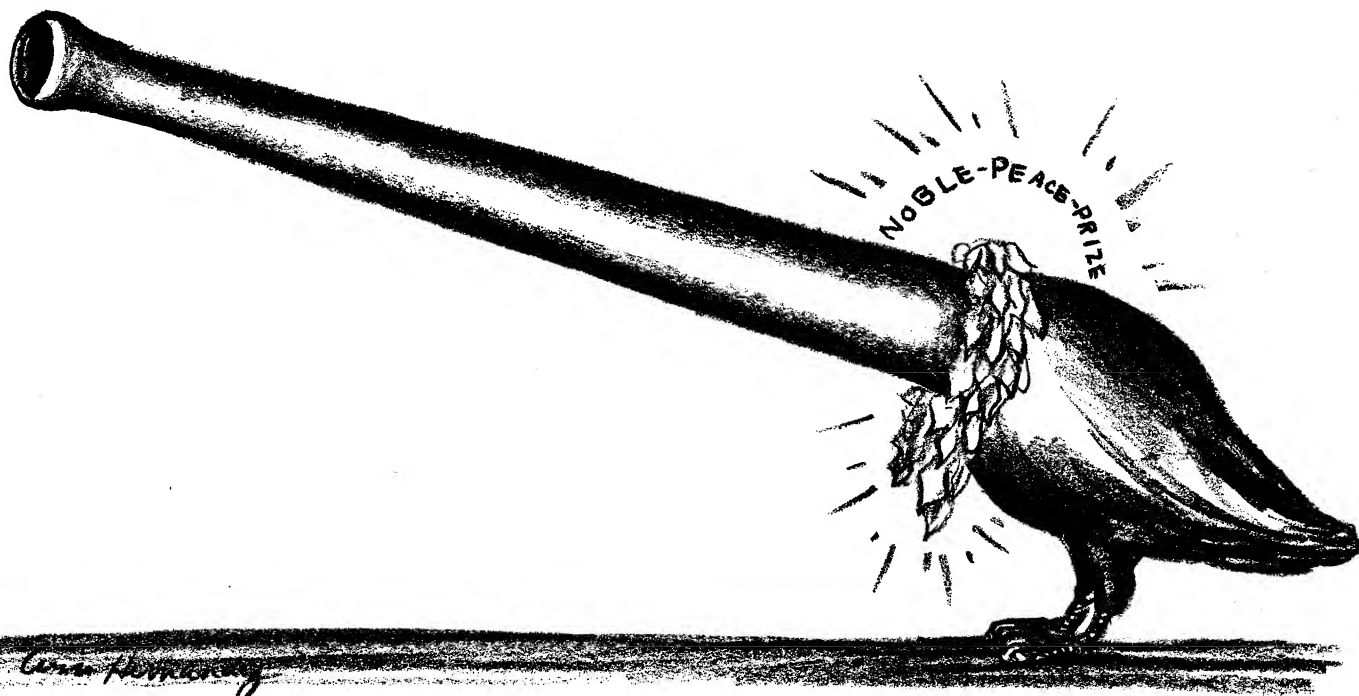


Clarence Chang

hin'



Clarence Chang



KELLOG'S DOVE OF PEACE

William Hernandez

*If ah was de Cap'n an' he was me
I'd let him knock off an' go on a sleep*

*Cap'n, Cap'n, didn't you all say
You wouldn't keep aworkin' me in de rain all day*

*If Ah haid mah weight in lime
I'd whip mah Cap'n till he went stone blin'*

*Pay day come an' we all git nuthin'
Cap'n he tryin to cheat me fo' suttin*

*My Cap'n he so damn mean
Ah think he come f'om New Orleans*

*I'm gonna spit in his coffee
An' spit in his tea
De lawd help dis nigger if he cotch me.*

*Sistern an' Brethern
Stop foolin wit' pray
When black face is lifted
Lawd turnin' 'way*

*Heart filled wit' sadness
Head bowed down wit' woe
In the hour of trouble
Where's a black man to go.*

*We're buryin' a brother
They kill for the crime
Tryin' to keep
What was his all the time.*

*When we's tucked him on under
What you goin' to do
Wait till it come
They arousin' fo' you too.*

*Your head tain' no apple.
For danglin' f'om a tree
Your body no carcass
For barbecuein' on a spree.*

*Stand on your feet
Club gripped 'tween your hands
Spill their blood too
Show 'em yours is a man's.*

This song is of Civil War origin, undoubtedly. But it has a new significance now with the younger Negro. They all know and sing it—a martial air of excellent merit.

A Negro boy—"maid of all work" at the little hotel in Columbus, N. C., sang this. He must be the exception to the widely accepted rule that all Negroes are good singers. They generally have an excellent ear for music, true. Pick up four Negroes anywhere at all and the chances are that you have an excellent quartet. But screechy, unmusical, blatant voices amongst the Negroes are just as common as with us. The time isn't anything to get excited about either.

*White man go to ribber
Couldn't get 'cross
Jump on top de nigger's back
Thought he was a horse*

*White man go to mountain
Couldn't climb de top
Grab hol' de nigger's coat
Tell nigger to pull him up*

*Nigger say to white man
Ah has on'y two legs jes' lak you
An' fo' ah lets you ride me
Ah has to grow de odder two*

*Nigger say to white man
Ah has on'y two legs jes' lak you
An' fo' ah pull you up dere
Ah has to grow de odder two*

In my opinion innumerable more instances of lynching occur than find their way into the records. Word of them is withheld at the discretion of local authorities. In many cases if a report is made at all "Death from natural causes" suffices. As a matter of fact statistics of any sort regarding the Southern Negro are necessarily sketchy affairs. Legal documents cost money. The Negro can't afford them. Thus he's often born, wed and dies—all without official knowledge or sanction. This song I picked up in Traveller's Rest, S. C. The melody alternates in mood between that of a spiritual and Scottish War Chant—the emasculating Christian influence is dominated by the impassioned call to arms.

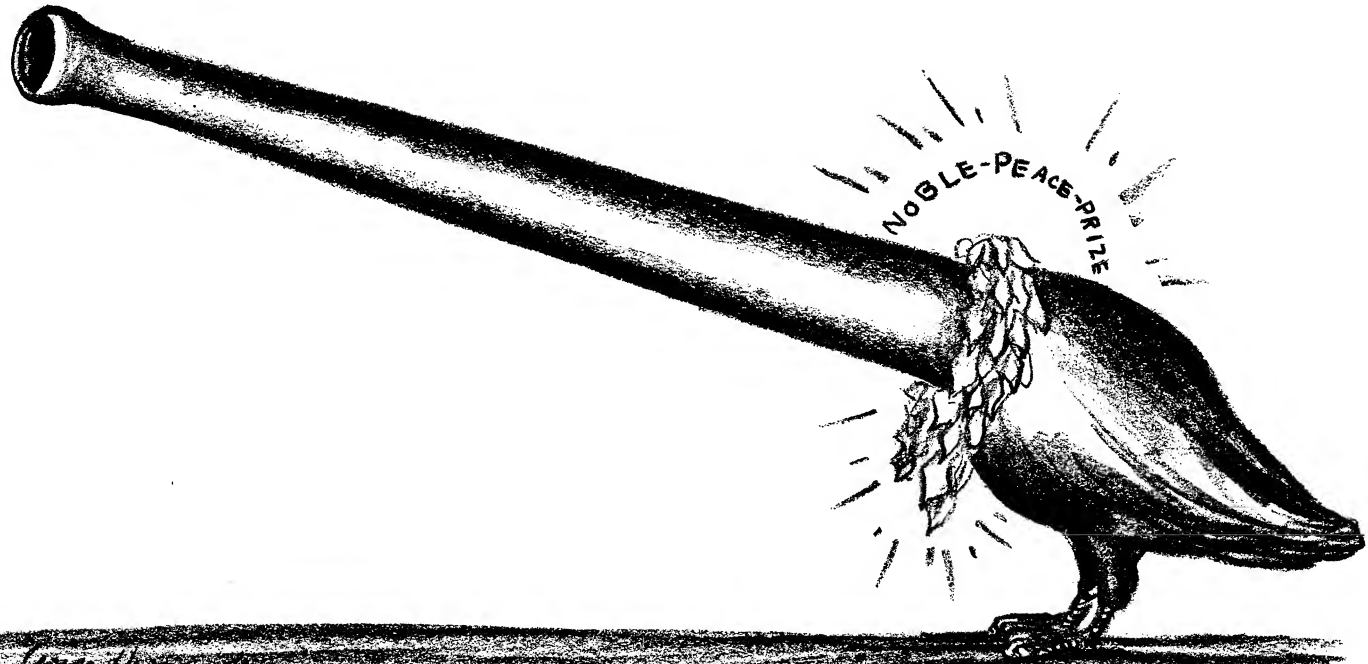
*Oh brethren rise, give praise to glory
For the year of the Jubilee
Do you want to be a soldier
For the year of the Jubilee.*

*Oh what you say brother
Oh what you say brother
Oh what you say brother
About dis wahr*

*I will die in the field
Stay in the field
Stay in the field brother
Stay in the field
Until the victory
March on and you shall gain the victory
March on and you shall gain the day*

*We want no cowards in our band
We call for only the strongest men*

*I intend to fight and never stop
Until I reach mountain top.*



KELLOG'S DOVE OF PEACE

William Hernandez

THEATRE

Overture

Sergei Eisenstein once said that Hollywood films about revolution differed from Soviet films because they always put the "lady and gentleman" in the foreground, and the revolution in the background. This is the chief characteristic of William Bolitho's play *Overture*, now running at the Longacre Theatre. Presumably the play is based on the Bavarian revolution of 1919; but the real issues of the struggle, the sufferings and heroism of the workers, the clash of parties is in the background, while the "lady and gentleman" are in the foreground. In this case the lady is a Katie Tauler, and the gentleman is a Karl Ritter, an idealistic scion of a wealthy family whom the horrors of his war experiences have driven to fight "for the people". Essentially the action of the play, in so far as there is any action, revolves around their romance. This is strikingly symbolized at the point where Katie is making a star on a red flag for the revolution. Goodness, no, Ritter says; the Russians have a flag like that, and this revolution must not be tainted with Communism. But Katie explains: this is a different kind of star; it is *our* star.

From this personal pathos, the rest naturally follows. Though this is supposed to be an uprising of the oppressed workers, specifically against an ordinance legalising the twelve-hour day, no real workers appear on the stage. The delegation which appears before the town council to protest against the ordinance consists of Katie, the idealistic bourgeois Karl Ritter, a level-headed Communist named Maxim; an old grey-haired editor named Levy; an elderly, fat blacksmith who looks like a retired bartender; and a tiny white-haired grandpa who is supposed to be a miner. These are representatives of the workers revolution. Not a single young and healthy worker; only two ideologues, a romantic campfollower (Katie was Maxim's sweetheart before she was Ritter's) and two aged wrecks. Of course, there are workers "off stage". At one point Maxim, disgusted with the feeble arguments between Ritter and the town council, throws the window open, and we hear the "voice of the people". A few voices bellow and several tin horns cackle. It sounds like a New Year's celebration on a Brooklyn sidestreet.

The struggle is chiefly verbal and here the Communist Maxim comes off best. He has no illusions about Ritter's ideals or about what can be done negotiating with the enemy. But Maxim, like the elderly worker, are seen from the *outside*. Bolitho does not begin to create character until he gets to the reactionaries. These are presented from the *inside*. And here the author sees straight. General von Hoeffer, having crushed the revolution, orders a corporal to capture Maxim, drag him out of his house and shoot him like a dog; but the erring Ritter is treated like a gentleman. He is, after all, "one of us." And he knows it and feels it. His guard is a young lieutenant who served with him during the imperialist war. "Hello, Hoffman," says the broken young idealist. And in that phrase there is all the anguish of the bourgeois idealist who suddenly realizes where he really belongs. And Hoffman says tenderly, "What are you doing in this mess?" Before he is shot, Ritter is treated not like a dog. That is reserved for the Maxims, the real enemies of the Republic. A priest reads the prayers to him; his friend Hoffman drinks with him—"to the world", no longer "to the people" or even "to the Cause".

The play ends in complete triumph for the reaction. As the Longacre put it on, it would seem that Communists are blood-thirsty beasts but imperialist generals are gentle-hearted people; for the Communist Maxim says about the bourgeoisie, calmly, "first we want the blood of the bastards"; and just as calmly shoots a manufacturer but General von Hoeffer clutches his fingers nervously then Katie is compelled, at his orders, to watch an execution.

Finally, the show is over. Maxim has presumably been shot off stage "like a dog"; Katie is to be released for betraying the Communists' address in the name of "love" and because she is afraid to die; Levy, the editor, also afraid of death, had previously committed suicide; and Ritter, with his ideals washed in prayers and whiskey marches off to be executed like an officer and a gentleman. Now the general orders a corporal sharply, "Take that thing down". The red flag, with Katie's and Ritter's personal star, is



Walter Steinhilber

THE CALIFORNIA STATE SUPREME COURT RULES AGAINST MOONEY AND BILLINGS.

hauled down by a corporal who flings it on the floor as the curtain goes down.

A play like *Overture* is bound to be a touchstone of class attitudes. Bolitho himself, it is said, was a bourgeois liberal, very "sympathetic" to the "rank and file" of humanity. It seems, however, that his was not the only hand which shaped the play; and whatever chances it had of being genuine were ruined by the stage directors. As the curtain rises, for instance, the strains of the *Marsellaise* come through the open window of the council-chamber. Since this is a German town, immediately after the war, it is natural to assume that the French have occupied it. Vain assumption. It is the workers demonstration off-stage which is playing this once revolutionary hymn. Such ignorance or fear of the *Internationale* is grotesque.

More important things, however, cannot be blamed on the producers, unless they tampered with the script. The Communist Maxim is cool, hardboiled, sure of his purpose; yet we are never told what it was all about. Ritter and Katie go into long harangues. Once, during the long and theatrically botched aeon when we are waiting for the journalist Levy to shoot himself they talk and talk about love, life, and ideals. Their conduct is "motivated". But Maxim acts with little explanation. Naturally the impression is created, that he is a cold-blooded "monster".

This is a typical bourgeois way of treating revolutionists in the theatre.

Of *Overture*, Professor William Lyons Phelps, friend of Major James J. Tunney, says: "The intelligent playgoer is deeply impressed and learns much about modern history and about human nature." Of *Roar China* the professor says: "This drama, if taken seriously, would be an insult to the intelligence of a subhuman adolescent".

And here, at last, we have the answer to the question of art vs. propaganda. When a play ends with the workers raising the red flag, that's "propaganda"; when it ends with an imperialist general hauling down the red flag, it's "art." ROBERT EVANS

NEW MASSES



Walter Steinhilber
**THE CALIFORNIA STATE SUPREME COURT RULES
AGAINST MOONEY AND BILLINGS.**

BOOKS

The Five-Year Plan of the Soviet Union, by G. T. Grinko. International Publishers. Cloth \$3.50; Popular Edition \$2.00.

To those who prefer the "colorful" accounts of Russian life done by special correspondents for afternoon newspapers this book by the Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Commission of the U.S.S.R. may seem a little too substantial. Pages of very breezy reading have been produced in recent weeks especially about the "Red Trade Menace." Capitalist press writers "from a car window" compete in long series of articles which stress the "mystery," the "baffling paradoxes" and the "enigma" of the Soviet Union. One professor of religious education at a corn belt university returned the other day to have his revelations announced in the press under the astonishing headline, "Soviets Rule Russia."

For workers who are not satisfied with this fluff we recommend this book by Comrade Gregory T. Grinko. It gives not only a heap of figures but, unlike any other book that has appeared in English, it deals with the whole "line" of development, the whole "perspective" and outlook for the Soviet Union. It is a political interpretation. It answers the question posed in its final chapter, "Whither U.S.S.R.?" One who has read this book will no longer be taken in by the "mystery" and "enigma" rubbish now sold by the space writers of the capitalist journals.

Grinko shows how Lenin laid the foundation for state planning when in the dark days of 1920 he plotted the ten-year plan for the electrification of Russia. The skeptics and mockers dubbed this initial plan "electro-fiction." But the power stations went up faster and in greater numbers than even the realist, Lenin, had anticipated. Those who doubt the success of the Five-Year Plan might well ponder these earlier achievements.

Although the Five-Year Plan has measured up to its industrial expectations, the first two years 1928-30 showing an increase in industrial output of 56% as against 47.5% called for in the Plan, no one was prepared for the sweeping scale on which it has exceeded its agricultural schedules. The peasants were always considered the great "stumbling block" on the path to socialism. Emigré generals in Paris and Rand School Mensheviks were equally certain that the Bolsheviks would finally be routed by the age-old individualism of the Russian farmers, illiterate, ragged and "sot in their ways."

The advance on this farm front has been almost miraculous. There are already 82,000 collective farming groups and 125 state farms, one of these being four times the size of the largest corporation farm in the United States. At least 30% of all agriculture has already been collectivized, 10% more than was contemplated in the whole 5-year plan. By next harvest at least 40% of all agriculture will be collectivized involving a farm population of some 50,000,000.

To those of us who stumbled over dead bodies on the roads of the Russian wheat provinces in the hunger winter of 1921-22, to those of us who returned as late as 1927 before the advance to the Five Year program has been started, all this seems nearly unbelievable. But scores of folks in their right minds, both Communists and Republicans, return to tell us it is so. And the story told by Grinko of the systematic approach to this problem and the background of its solution helps us better to understand how this great change has come upon the peasants.

But what of the worker? What does the Plan mean to him and his family? Here are a few cold facts with which to confront your friends who have been saturated by the stale lies of Matthew Woll and Father Walsh.

1. Unemployment has been wiped out by the operations of the Plan, leaving a demand for 1,200,000 additional skilled workers to carry on in 1931. The soviet trade schools are training the former unemployed for these jobs. Compare this to the breadlines, the 8,000,000 unemployed, in Hooverland.

2. The Plan has made possible a progressive shortening of the working day. Already about half the soviet workers are on the 7-hour day in addition to the tens of thousands in the more

dangerous and unhealthy occupations—including coal miners as well as ordinary clerks and taxi-cab drivers—who work only 6 hours a day. And about 70% of all workers are already on the new "continuous working week," that is, four days of work and one day of rest. Compare these facts with the 12 hour day still worked in Pennsylvania steel plants, the 11-hour day in South Carolina cotton mills, and even longer hours in other "free labor" industries of America.

3. Real money wages of soviet workers are now about 35% above pre-war, but about 85% above when you count in all social benefits and wage equivalents. Moscow workers' standards of living are now higher than those of most European capitals. Soviet coal miners now receive in cash wages, insurance, housing and other benefits more than the coal miners of Great Britain or those of any European countries. Compare this with the epidemic of wage cuts now sweeping the United States.

4. Finally, "rationalization" for the Russian workers means greater productivity, more scientific work. But unlike in capitalist countries it means also a decrease in accidents and absences due to sickness. Compare this with the mad pace of the machine, the rising accident severity rates, and the appalling increase in "technological unemployment" that is born of the capitalist speed-up system.

The International Publishers, pioneer in the field of left-wing publishing, in its first five years has printed about 30 works that deal primarily with Russia and the Russian Revolution. One could build a well-rounded library on soviet affairs without going outside the catalogue of the International. And the Grinko book is the interpretive key to this Russian series. It is worth its cloth bound price, illustrated, for folks with \$3.50 to spend. Its popular price is less than the price of a ticket (at the door) to a *New Masses* Ball. If you don't have this much, the book is advisedly worth stealing.

ROBERT DUNN.



Anton Refregier



Anton Refregier

More "Impartiality"

Soviet Russia, by William Henry Chamberlain, Little Brown & Co. \$5.00

This is one of those impartial books. It is full of facts and figures (authoritative figures, which are very informative when they are not already out-dated) which aim to prove that after all the Bolsheviks are not so much.

The author, who has been the *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent in Moscow for eight years, seems anxious to minimize the importance of the October Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet Union. It is simply part of the historical evolution of Russia. Its roots are in the past and its fruits are still far in the future. Even "if the private capitalist system had been restored in Russia after the revolution it seems likely private industry would also have shown substantial gains."

Mr. Chamberlain briefly outlines the history of Russia, describes the organization and workings of the Communist Party and its outstanding personalities, and then gives a comprehensive description of industry, education, culture, youth, the "peasant-sphinx", religion, and liberty in the USSR today. He wishes the success or failure of the Soviet experiment might be judged by "some commission of super-experts in economics and industrial production, approaching the subject with no advance bias in favor of either capitalism or socialism." But in the absence of such a commission he ventures to state "a few quite humble and tentative impressions" of his own.

These "humble impressions" reach the conclusion that the "most definite lesson" that can be drawn from the test of socialism in Russia is that the abolition of private capital does not automatically make possible "a substantial improvement in the living conditions of the masses of the people."

He cites crowded living conditions; lack of a variety of food and difficulty in obtaining it; lack of manufactured goods. And he criticizes the Five-Year-Plan because "the lion's share of the increased production is in objects which have little direct significance for the consumer"—like electric power and Diesel engines.

Every place that Mr. Chamberlain has made first hand investigations and has interrogated workers, he has unerringly picked out discontented workers full of complaints. He seems never to have discovered among the rank and file a worker who saw any improvement since the old days, or who shared the enthusiasm of Soviet officials for the great program of Russia's up-building. In fact, he qualifies every government statement of plans or existing activities with "presumably"—"supposedly"; and seldom is any favorable statement about conditions made without a "but" to modify it.

His words of sympathy are reserved for the intelligentsia whose "tragedy lies in the fact that it is a perishing class". And for the Baptists, a religious sect "unspoiled by prosperity" which gives the impression of a sect "that had grown spontaneously out of the masses of people"; an expression of the "great Russian soul". Russian Communism, on the other hand, strongly suggests "a new, young, fanatical, crusading religion, with a set of infallible dogmas in the shape of the teachings of Marx and Lenin"; and with this the youngsters "are crammed at an early age".

In the midst of such an alien world the author sighs for the pleasant ways of capitalist democracy where there is the Anglo-Saxon tradition of freedom of speech and press; where there is a spirit of "mellow skepticism which weighs conservative and revolutionary values in the balance and finds them equally lacking". He comforts himself with the belief that "the international revolution which Lenin predicted so often has not yet broken out; and perhaps its prospects tend to grow dimmer rather than brighter with the passing of years".

"Men have dreamed of socialism, philosophers and economists have worked out theoretical schemes, Orators have stirred the masses. But the roots of capitalism and private enterprise are deep and strong."

"Thank god", the author undoubtedly adds under his breath. No wonder the capitalist papers liked this book.

HELEN BLACK

The Cops

The Third Degree, by Emanuel H. Lavine. Vanguard Press. \$2.00.

The Third Degree tells what every newspaperman, policeman, lawyer and radical active in any American city is apt to know in pretty full detail: that the police are habitually violent, vicious and "illegal"; that there is a close connection between criminals and organized racketeers and politicians; that it is very difficult for a properly connected person to get into any very serious trouble with the law; that corruption is not a matter of chance, but intrinsic to the scheme upon which the government of office holders is built; and that for all practical purposes the law is not what is listed in the books, but what is administered by thugs in gowns or uniforms. The book is valuable and terrible because it is written in terms of actual incident. Sound teeth are drilled with a rough burr until the prisoner confesses. A youth "was grabbed by a sensitive portion of the lower groin and also kicked in the abdomen . . . Relays of detectives would go into the room armed with blackjacks and pieces of rubber hose, only to emerge covered with perspiration and giving the same reply: "He won't come through." And when all these gentler means fail, the prisoner is tied to a chair. The detective "removed the man's blood-soaked necktie and opened his shirt front, exposing his neck and chest. Next he pulled out his blackjack and struck Rumore across the Adam's apple with all his strength . . . Blood spurted half way across the room. What seemed like minutes elapsed before he was able to get some air flowing down his mouth and throat."

These are not exceptional incidents, just bits out of the daily routine. The author of this book is a police reporter for a New York newspaper; he is telling here nothing that he has just discovered. Why, then, do such stories as compose this book not make up the run of his daily stories? Why, when *The Third Degree* was published did it create a one-day scandal in the press, quickly forgotten and never reflected in the trend of news reporting?

The superficial answer is in the author's own attitude. He accepts the institution that he exposes as a necessity. It is neat, efficient and often leaves no trace on the subject. Mr. Lavine has a fine contempt for the squealer, the cry baby, the bad sport who tries to crawl out of his Third Degree confession during his trial. In other words this typical newspaper reporter is quite of one piece with the police. He writes from their angle.

A deeper reason is not stated in the book. Neither the police nor the organized criminal, nor yet the newspaper, operates in a vacuum. If the institution of corrupt law exists it is because it is useful to the class in power. The gangster is useful to the politician and the politician to the newspaper. And they all are useful to the State, which is to say to the men and groups of men who own the State. They work together as neatly as the parts of any good machine.

MELVIN P. LEVY

Coming in the

FEBRUARY ISSUE OF NEW MASSES

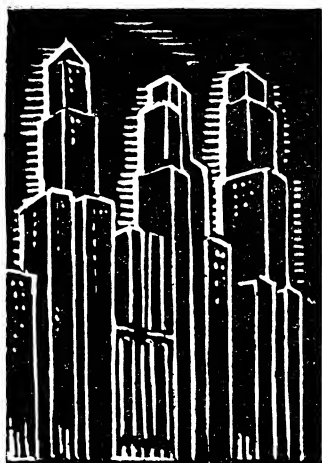
The John Reed Club Delegation report from the International Congress of Revolutionary Writers and Artists held in Soviet Russia.

Michael Gold writers from abroad. A story by John Dos Passos. From China Agnes Smedley writes of literature and the theatre in the midst of revolution. Another scene from a play by Paul Peters. And Joseph Freeman estimates American Poetry reviewing "Chelsea Rooming House", "Rebel Poets Anthology for 1930," "Red Renaissance" and others.

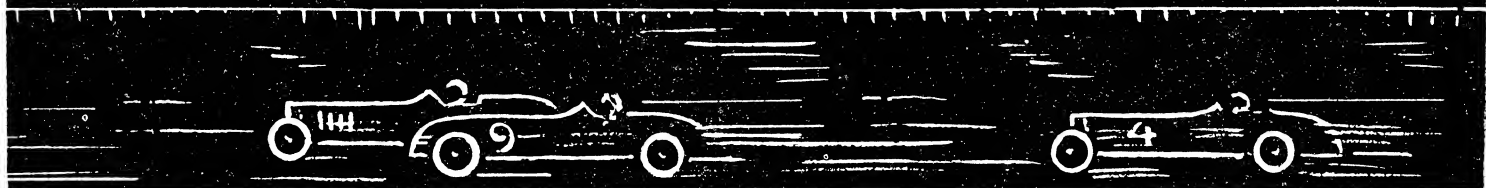
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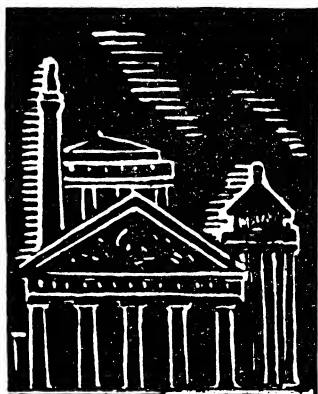
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The Palm Group of Chicago

Editor of *New Masses*:

The *Palm* Group, (League of Proletarian artists, writers, musicians, etc.) though organized only a couple months ago, has already established itself in the Left wing movement of Chicago and vicinity. Membership is growing rapidly, and increasing demands are being made upon us by the workers groups for many of whom *Palm* has supplied programs, entertainment, and always a brief talk on the purposes of *Palm* and the role of revolutionary culture.

Briefly, these are our latest steps:

1. Formation of a Blue Blouse Group (The first one in the U. S. to our knowledge) organized and at work.
2. A huge affair to be put over in February by the combined workers' cultural forces of Chicago (We have organizations like the Workers Studio, Ballet, Symphony Orchestra, Hungarian Orchestra, Freiheit Mandolin Orchestra and Singing Society and many individual artists and groups.)
- 3.—An International Orchestra composed of the best forces of the workers' orchestras in Chicago.
- 4.—Establish a Lecture Bureau for spreading proletarian culture.
- 5.—Arrange our first combined Art Exhibit of the work of *New Masses* artists which you are preparing for us (give us the best you have, comrades!) together with our own artists of Chicago. When ready, this will be held in a suitable hall or at our own Workers Book Shop, with an opening program arranged by *Palm*.

There is a lot of work to be done yet, and we are determined to carry on with all the combined energy of our forces.

With comradely greetings to the John Reed Club of New York and all other proletarian groups in the growing workers cultural movement.

Fraternally,

A. LEBEDINSKY.

Chicago, Ill.

The John Reed Club

Editor of *New Masses*:

The John Reed Club is looking forward to a new year full of activity. A collection of drawings by the artists of the club is now on its way to the USSR, where it will be exhibited in Moscow under the auspices of the Cultural Relations Society.

A similar exhibition of drawings by Soviet artists was brought back to the U. S. by William Gropper when he returned the last week in December, and this work is very soon to be on view in New York.

The return of William Gropper and Harry L. Potamkin from the International Congress of Revolutionary Writers and Artists was celebrated first by a party of club members on December 27th in the club rooms; and on January 8th a more formal reception will be given the delegation in Irving Plaza, Irving Place and 15th Street, where Gropper, Potamkin, Magil and Olgin will be the speakers.

At the regular club meeting on December 19th Joseph Freeman led a discussion in which later all club members participated. The basis of discussion was Sinclair Lewis' speech of acceptance of the Nobel Prize and led to an estimate of other writers and their place in American literature.

A discussion is scheduled for January 2nd, in the club room, when the speaker will be Bennett Stevens, leading a discussion on "The Role of the Church in the Class Struggle."

The series of John Reed Club pamphlets, begun with Abe Magil and Joseph North's pamphlet *The Life and Death of a Worker: Steve Katovis* (now being published in Soviet Russia in a huge edition) is to have several additions within the next few months. The artists of the club are beginning the drawings for an all-picture pamphlet on unemployment. Other pamphlets—on John



Prof. Hung Seng—prisoner to the left, who resigned his position as professor of modern drama in Fudan and Chinan Universities in Shanghai following a police raid on his house. He is a well-known motion picture producer in Shanghai. The charge now against him is Communism.

Reed, on art in America, and a number of subjects still to be decided are coming soon.

The John Reed club will give a dance in February: Friday the 27th, at Teutonia Hall, East 16th Street, near 3rd Avenue. Tickets \$1.50, to which all *New Masses* readers are invited.

New York, N. Y.

SECRETARY.

The Soviet Political Theatre

In no other country is the political theatre so highly developed as in present-day Russia where over 100 have been already established. "We have only two kinds of plays," commented the Moscow manager, "those somewhat less political, and those somewhat more."

The purpose of the Political Theatre is to dramatize any political issue which happens to be uppermost in the public mind. The plays are written collectively; the actors, most of them workers giving up their spare time, vote for their director who is himself usually a mechanic or worker in some nearby factory.

"Our theatre is for people who cannot otherwise understand many of the issues involved in the construction of a socialist state. Tractorization, for instance, arouses many problems complex to the peasant mind. We try, by using the art of the stage, to give a grasp of what tractorization means to the development of the Soviet Union.

"Against our enemies the stage is also a powerful weapon. We direct it against Nepmen and Kulaks and those who would try to sabotage our workers' government," declared Sakalovski, of Leningrad, who is directing the present Leningrad group of players "guesting" in Moscow. TRAM is the name of their organization which has become very popular in Russia. Its players, all of whom are workers, now give all of their time to the stage.

Fields is the title of their present production, dealing with the Kulaks' efforts to influence the peasants against the collectivization of their farms. The play shows the sinister motives behind such destructive propaganda; depicts the dangerous toil of the city proletariat who also must pay with life and limb the price of industrialization.

"The peasants have an idea that the industrial worker enjoys all the advantages, while he himself is to become a state serf. We try to counteract this false notion by showing him that the industrial worker's lot is also one of hardship and sacrifice."

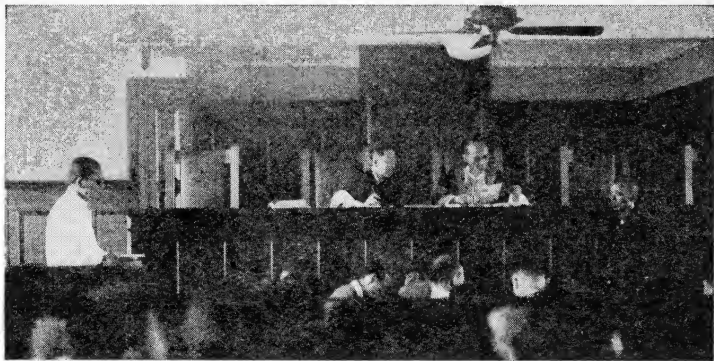
The last act shows the triumph of the peasants over the Kulaks and unemployed aristocrats who try to wreck government plans. The tractor becomes the symbolic hero; a joyous chant breaks out from the peasants, and one sees the wheat rising in the fields, row on row, plump on tall stalks. . .

After every play a public discussion follows between actors and audience, dealing with the value of the play, possible improvements, etc. "The public must be the real playwright of our performances," stated the manager. "It must be the critic of our efforts." The theatre is crowded night after night, and has created much enthusiasm everywhere in the Union.

Moscow, USSR.

ED FALKOWSKI.

NEW MASSES



Prof. Hung Seng—prisoner to the left, who resigned his position as professor of modern drama in Futan and Chinan Universities in Shanghai following a police raid on his house. He is a well-known motion picture producer in Shanghai. The charge now against him is Communism.

From the Writers of China

Dear Comrades:

Today the oppressed revolutionary masses of workers and peasants of China are establishing their power—the Soviets. In this struggle the Chinese masses have become conscious of their historical duty. They now stand on the road to a new life, filled with a courageous social activity.

But this fight for fundamental human achievement is meeting with the most savage suppression by the so-called "cultured" progressive countries. The blood of the Chinese masses, massacred by British and Japanese imperialists during the last three years, has not yet dried, yet these dark forces are committing new atrocities. Recently, British, Japanese and American warships bombarded the Soviet established in Changsha and today the Yantze River swarms with imperialist warships. These warships are daily bombarding territory in which workers and peasants have established Soviet power and they are making every attempt to suppress the Chinese revolution and to massacre Chinese revolutionaries. It is clear to everyone today that the victorious Chinese revolution would deal a death blow to world capitalism and set the fires of the world revolution burning more brightly. Knowing this, world capitalism instinctively supports and unites with the dark forces in China—the militarists, gentry, landlords, the Kuomintang and the Reorganizationists. When they fail the imperialists step in and massacre the Chinese revolutionary masses directly.

The Chinese Left-Wing Writers' League has set as its first task the active support and direct participation in the struggle for the freedom of the masses. It had decided to hurl its strength against the reactionary elements, against all forces which seek

to crush revolution. This League is the directing head of Chinese revolutionary artist-writers. It regrets that, because of the brutal white terror, and because of denial of freedom of publication and organization, its work is not as widely and fully known to the public, nor is it interpreted internationally as it should be. However, we wish our comrades in every land to know of our work and of the task we all have set before us.

Today the Chinese ruling class is using the most extreme brutality in its attempts to suppress the revolutionary cultural movement. Each Chinese revolutionary writer today is defying arrest and death by carrying on revolutionary activity. But we have determined to stand shoulder to shoulder with the workers and peasants in our life-and-death struggle for liberation. In addition to this, as educated men and women we are now shouldering the work of education by starting a correspondence movement among workers, peasants and soldiers in order to promote their political education and class ideology, and we hope to establish an organ whereby revolutionary news and experiences with our comrades abroad may be exchanged.

We need the support of the revolutionary world proletariat. We call upon our comrades in every land to help us by every possible means—to give full publicity to the Chinese revolutionary struggle, to hold back the military and other forces of the imperialists, by forcing them to withdraw their men-of-war from Chinese waters where they are supporting the Chinese reaction in the fight against the revolution—for without the support of the imperialists the Chinese militarist and Kuomintang rule could not withstand for one month the onslaughts of the revolutionary workers and peasants. We ask our comrades in every land to use any and every means to call off these imperialist blood-hounds. Over seas and continents we reach out to grasp the hands of our comrades in every land, to express our solidarity, to pledge our help, to ask unstinted support of the peasants and workers struggling for a new Communist society in China. Our aims are to

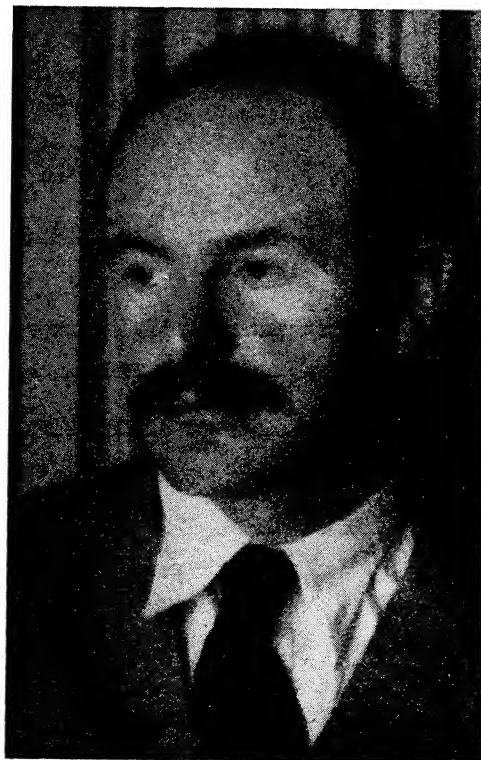
Destroy imperialism—
Support the world revolution—
Protect the Chinese revolution—
Establish Communist culture!

Shanghai, China

CHINESE LEFT-WING WRITERS'
LEAGUE.



Lo Hsun—China's greatest short story writer, leader of the All China League of Left Wing Writers, taken on his 50th birthday. He is also active in the League for Freedom and other Left cultural associations.



Hugo Gellert—born 1892 in Budapest. Came to America as a kid. Started working at 14 in a machine shop. Dug ditches, skinned mules, picked cotton and taught school. Illustrated newspapers, magazines, books. Held one man exhibitions of his paintings, painted mural decorations and worked in the steel mills. Was a contributor to the *Masses*, an editor of the *Liberator* and one of the organizers of the *New Masses*. President of the Anti-Horthy League and an officer of the newly organized Council for the Protection of the Foreign Born. At present he is making a series of lithographs interpreting *Capital* of Karl Marx to be published in the coming season.

In This Issue

Joseph Freeman—executive board member of *New Masses*, is co-author of *Voices of October* published in the past year.

Walter Steinhilber—is a New York commercial artist.

Agnes Smedley—author of *Daughter of Earth*, is now in Shanghai as correspondent for the European press.

Maurice Becker—painter of note, was one of the founders of the old *Masses* in 1910.

I. Klein—executive board member of *New Masses* is a frequent contributor to various publications.

Murray Godwin—making his first *New Masses* appearance, was editor for the Ford Motor publications in Detroit, is now freelance writer in New York.

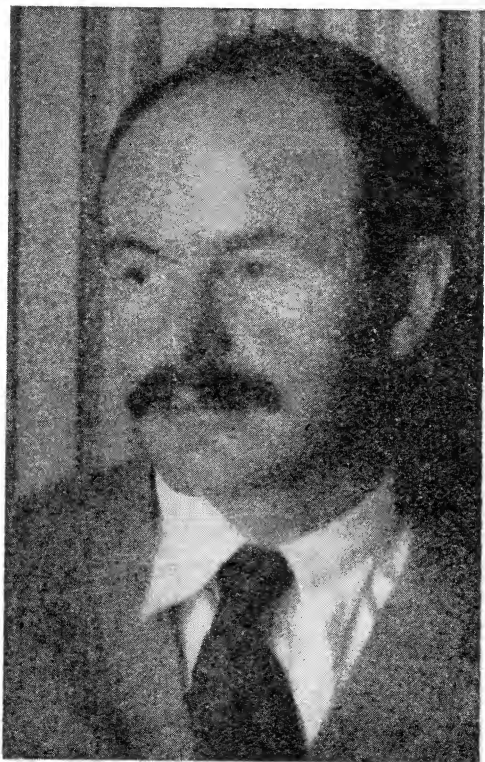
Clarence Chang—born 26 years ago in Canton China, now lives in Windsor, Canada, and attends art school in Detroit, Mich. This is his first work in print.

H. J. Krier—young proletarian poet of Arkansas, also makes his first *New Masses* appearance.

Anton Refregier—painter, member of the John Reed Club, will exhibit his work at the G.R.D. Studio, 58 W. 55 St., New York, from December 22 until January 3.

Otto Soglow—New York artist, illustrator, is a contributing editor of *New Masses*.

William Hernandez—young New York artist, is a contributor to the *Daily Worker*, *Labor Unity* and other publications.



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